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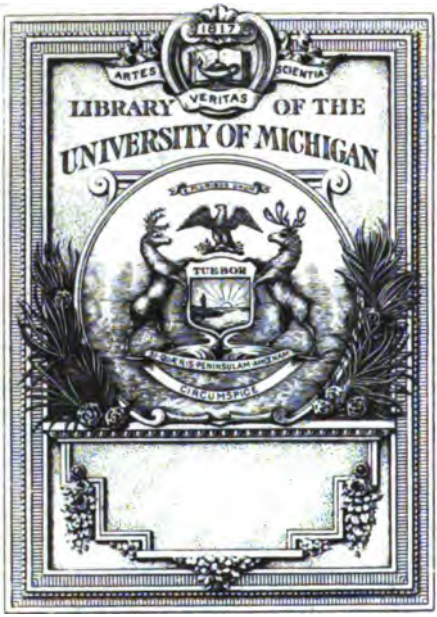

THE GIFT OF
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The Works of

CHARLES PAUL DE KOCK

With a General Introduction by

JULES CLARETIE

LITTLE LISE

Translated into English by

EDITH MARY NORRIS

THE FREDERICK J. QUINBY COMPANY

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CHAPTER I

A Maid on an Errand

"Adrienne! Adrienne! Well, I should like to know if she is coming! Oh, that girl is unbearable. Never here when she is wanted — and no bell. There ought to be one here, however. Adrienne! Adrienne!"

A stout girl with a tolerably fresh complexion and rather well-built; with a common face, a nose wider than it was long, and light hair bordering on the red, presently came into a room which might have passed for a boudoir, where a lady who seemed to be fainting was lying on a sofa, while another — a younger one, not at all pretty, the elegance of her toilet, in fact, could not disguise her ugliness — was clapping her hands and calling loudly for the maidservant.

"What is the matter now, madame?" asked Mademoiselle Adrienne, who did not appear to have hurried herself in the least to get there. "You were shouting as if the house was on fire."

"What is the matter? don't you see, then, mademoiselle, that your mistress has fainted, after uttering the most heartrending cry, and see how she has stiffened herself out."

"Oh, yes, I know all about that — madame is nervous — her fits take her when she is vexed or when she has been disputing with M. Casimir."

"It took her just now after reading a letter which you brought to her. But when Ambroisine has these fits you give her something to take, I suppose — you don't leave her without help, do you?"

"Certainly not, madame, I make her take a dose of a draught that the doctor ordered, and that revives her in a few minutes."

"Well, then, Adrienne, look here — give her a dose, and do hurry, for she seems to be suffering — poor Ambroisine. Do you know where the draught is?"

"Yes, madame, yes, of course I know. Oh, good heavens! now I remember —"

"What is it?"

"Oh, bless my heart! — yes, madame told me yesterday to go and have another bottle made up. Wait! yes, that reminds me —"

"What, is there none of the draught here?"

The maid, who had opened a cupboard and taken from it a glass phial that was quite empty, showed it to her mistress' friend, saying,—

"There! look! I was telling you the truth, there isn't a drop of it left."

"Then you didn't go and order it yesterday?"

"I forgot it. It was the portress' fault, she stopped me to talk about her cat as I was going out — her cat has disappeared for two days past —"

"But it isn't a question of the portress' cat; it is your mistress we must get help for. Have you the prescription for that draught?"

"Yes, madame, as I was going to get it yesterday it must still be in my pocket."

And mademoiselle fumbled in her pocket, from which she took, first of all some muscatel raisins; she smiled, saying,—

"It's that idiot of a grocer's man; he's always stuffing something into my pocket. I tell him roundly enough, 'Leave me alone, keep those for your beggars. I will not go and pick nuts with you.'"

"This prescription, Adrienne; it doesn't matter what you said to the grocer's man."

"Oh, it must be here!"

Adrienne pulled out a paper and read the address of a ready-made clothing shop, where they offered goods at eighty per cent on the cost; she threw it aside, saying,—

"I went there, madame, but they were liars, they did not sell new things, they sold me a pair of cloth trousers that had been turned."

"Why, did you buy cloth trousers for yourself?"

"No, it was for a brother of one of my countrywomen."

"Why, you must have lost this prescription, you unlucky girl."

"No, madame; wait, here it is, here it is! it

had some lumps of sugar wrapped up in it, that the lemonade dealer's boy gave me."

"Now, run to the pharmacy. Is it far from here?"

"No, madame, quite near — at this end of the Rue Meslée, a fine pharmacy, in the new building almost on the Rue du Temple. Why, it's one of the best in Paris."

"I only hope the prescription won't take long to make up."

"Oh, no, madame; if I tell them it is needed in a hurry, they'll make it up for me at once; they are very obliging, very nice, the gentlemen in that pharmacy."

"You'll run there at once, won't you?"

"Yes, madame, only just give me time to put my cap on and I'll go."

"What need is there to put on a cap? Can't you go as you are?"

"Oh, madame never likes me to go out bare-headed; she says it is very vulgar."

"But your mistress won't know anything about it."

"Excuse me, someone might recognize me and tell her they had seen me in the street without a cap. Madame would at once discharge me; but don't be afraid, I'll go as fast as I can."

The young girl ran to her room, which was in the attic. She got a cap and placed it on her head, she looked at herself in a small looking-glass, and,

not liking the set of the cap, she took it off, leisurely looked for another in a broken card-board box, tried it on, looked at herself, then, after a moment's hesitation, opened the box again and took out the first cap; this time she kept it on and at last went down her five flights of stairs to go and have the draught made up for her mistress, who all this time had been in a fainting condition.

But just as she was passing the portress' lodge the latter shouted to her,—

"Mamzelle Adrienne! Mamzelle Adrienne! good news—"

"And what is that, Madame Bédou?"

"My cat has come back—that poor Pagnole is found again. Wait, here he is."

"Why, that is true; and where was he?"

"Oh, I am going to tell you that, it is quite a story. Come in for a minute."

"I can't, I'm going to the chemist's to get a prescription made up for madame, who is ill, who has a nervous attack."

"You know very well she is subject to them. Just imagine, it was that ragamuffin, that hang-dog fellow of the fifth floor, the so-called literary man."

"Why, M. Noirci?"

"Yes, it was that rascally M. Noirci; to revenge himself, because the other day I wouldn't open the door to him at two o'clock in the morning. Do you understand how a man who lodges in an attic room at a hundred and sixty francs has the face to come

in at two o'clock in the morning? And he never gives me the slightest gratuity. Well, it was he who shut Pagnole up in his room, where I am quite certain he didn't give him anything to eat; and so that poor martyr was lost for the better part of two days — happily the lawyer's maid on the second floor heard him mewing and she came and said to me, 'I think your cat is shut up in the author's room' — I just made one bound up to the fifth floor, and I recognized my treasure's voice. I knocked — I would have battered in the door if he hadn't opened it—he called to me, 'I am not up.' 'Get up, then,' I answered him; 'I am not dressed.' 'I don't care a fig if you aren't—do you think I want to photograph you.' At last he opened the door and my cat came and jumped into my arms. I can assure you Noirci will be sent away at the end of his term; besides, he doesn't pay and they don't intend to keep him."

"Good-by, Madame Bédou."

"I'll tell you when you come back what the gentleman of the pen said to excuse himself for having shut Pagnole up. Can you imagine — "

"Yes, yes, when I come back."

Mademoiselle Adrienne was at last in the street. When she was passing by the grocer's shop, a young man, who seemed to be watching for her, barred her passage, saying to her,—

"Where are you running to at that rate. You're going as if you were on a velocipede."

"How stupid!—as if women could get up on one of those things—it is a pity we can't, all the same, for it would be very convenient for us to go on our errands."

"Women could go on them, only they'd have to put trousers on—and smoke pipes."

"Look here, M. Ciboulette, let me pass, I haven't time to talk now."

"Oh, you haven't time with me, but yesterday, at ten o'clock in the evening, I saw you talking with the boy at the lemonade dealer's on the boulevard—the houses on the Boulevard Saint Martin on the left side all have an entrance to the Rue Meslée, it's very handy—"

"Well, what of it—yes, I remember now, in fact, I was speaking to M. Alexandre—madame wanted to have a bavaroise-au-lait[1] before going to bed, because she had a slight cough; she thought that would make her sleep off her cold—then, as I was going to the café to order what madame wanted, I met M. Alexandre in the street."

"Ah, that's good—a bavaroise-au-lait. I think that's sweet—"

"What is? What are you trying to say with your chaffing?"

"I mean to say that if your mistress expected it after she had gone to bed, she would have had time to go to sleep before taking it—you stayed

[1] Bavaroise-au-lait, a beverage made chiefly with milk and sweetened with some syrup.

a good half hour in the street with that lemonade fellow."

"That was because he had a good deal to say to me, apparently."

"Yes, and if that's how he does his business they'll be giving him the sack presently."

"He wouldn't take that ill; he isn't at all anxious to stay where he is; he's going to take a café and set up on his own account."

"Oh, then, that is different. Are you going to keep his accounts?"

"Mercy! who knows? Stranger things than that have happened."

"Alexandre going to buy the stock of a lemonade-stand. Ha! ha! ha! that's too steep, that is — that may go with the bavaroise."

"M. Ciboulette, you are very malicious, you talk ill of everybody, you disparage the whole neighborhood. It's very well known that every day some lemonade dealer's boy or other sets up for himself in business on his own account — one sees nothing else."

"Yes, but they are those who are economical, who have laid money up for that very purpose— they are not gadabouts and spendthrifts, like your Alexandre."

"Why do you say your Alexandre? he's not more mine than anybody else's! Does he owe you anything, poor fellow, that you speak so badly of him?"

"Yes, he owes me yet for a pound of honey I let him have to sweeten his herb tea when he was ill, and as the boss had forbidden me to give credit, the loss fell on me!"

"Good gracious! he'll pay you for your honey. There! they are calling you — go back to your prunes."

"Are you coming back this way?"

"Never! you have too evil a tongue."

The maid resumed her way; but not a hundred steps farther on she came across another maid almost her own age and very coquettishly dressed. These damsels accosted each other.

"Oh, is that you, Rose?"

"Good-evening, Adrienne. Where are you going so fast?"

"To the pharmacist's to have a draught made up for my mistress, who is nervous."

"Are you still with your Madame Montémolly?"

"Yes, I'm still there."

"Do you like it?"

"Hum! not very well, it's rather dull; but then, I'm not restrained, I can go out and come in late and that suits me."

"Your mistress is a kept woman, isn't she?"

"Mercy! no one would ever take her for that — she gives herself out as a widow."

"Widow of a general, no doubt — they are all general's widows — that is one of their fads."

"No, mine says her husband was a banker.

And one thing is certain, he left her a fortune; she has at least fifty thousand francs income, perhaps more, and she doesn't go into debt, we pay all our accounts. Oh, we are orderly, I can tell you."

"How old is your Madame Montémolly?"

"She says she's thirty-four, but I think she is thirty-eight, if not more; she has been very handsome, and she is still very good-looking."

"And she has a crowd of admirers?"

"Why, no, unfortunately she hasn't — for if she had, the house would be a good deal more cheerful and the tips would be more numerous."

"What! she's still good-looking enough to please, and your mistress has given up all idea of love affairs."

"No, you are wrong there! my mistress has not renounced love, quite the contrary; she loves — passionately loves, a young man, a very handsome fellow, M. Casimir Dernold, who comes nearly every day to keep her company — he's a musician, a painter also; in fact, he can do anything he wishes, but, so far as I can see, he doesn't want to do anything but amuse himself. Madame is perfectly daft over M. Casimir, she thinks only of him, dreams only of him, busies herself only with him; and that is why she won't listen to all those who want to pay court to her. She is really faithful to her lover — to the point of making herself ill about him, she's as anxious as possible if he fails to come at his usual hour for visiting her.

Oh, my dear Rose, how stupid it is to be so fond of a man as all that; a person's a good deal happier who doesn't care for them at all — that's my opinion."

"I think so too! I listen to all those who talk to me; so I haven't a moment free; when I am not talking with one I am talking with another. Ha! ha! it's a good deal more amusing. And this M. Casimir, your mistress' lover, how old is he?"

"Twenty-six or twenty-seven at the very most."

"And your lady is thirty-eight, she must be able to make him think black is white."

"I don't know. For the matter of that madame watches him closely, she is as jealous as a tigress, she follows him; he must render an account of what he does every day, hour by hour."

"Poor fellow, what an existence! I would much rather be in the penitentiary."

"Sometimes he resists, he shouts, he sends madame to the right about. Oh, then there are terrible scenes! madame weeps, or sometimes she even takes a little poniard that she hides in her bosom, and says she is going to kill herself."

"Good! everyone knows that she would not kill herself!"

"My word, there was one time, it's a month ago now, when she learned that M. Casimir had been to Mabille, she thrust her poniard at her breast. But apparently she did not aim straight, for she only caught herself on the ear, and made it bleed!"

"Ha, ha, ha! she wanted to stab herself in the ear. She's quite a humbug, is your mistress. And this young Casimir, is he rich also?"

"Rich! him! no, indeed; he hasn't a sou. You don't quite understand the situation, and why he is madame's slave, do you?"

"Oh, I understand — I understand now; it is she who manages the money matters."

"Exactly, she holds him by her purse strings. If he had any money, I don't believe that she could have kept him so long."

"Oh, well, Adrienne, I don't know if you are like me, but I have very little use for men who haven't a sou!"

"And I have no use for them at all. A pretty thing! for a man to allow a woman to entertain him, to treat him. Why, it's the world upside down. Wasn't man made to earn money — and woman to spend it?"

"Oh, well, my dear, there are a good many women stupid enough to let their sweethearts spend all their money. Why, there was that big Maflée, you know big Maflée well, don't you?"

"Who is that — Louisette?"

"Yes, but they always call her big Maflée, because she has two cheeks that look as though they were swollen. Well, some time back she made acquaintance with a nice-looking man, it was at the Pilodo ball, and he told her he came from her part of the country. He would have her dance all the

best dances with him, even the ones she didn't know. Then he proposed a dinner with champagne for the following Sunday; she accepted, she went to dine with her new acquaintance, who drank like a sponge; then, when the moment for paying the bill came, this gentleman declared to Maflée that he had not received some money from home, which he was expecting, and begged her to lend him enough to pay the bill. She had fortunately taken her pocket-book with her. She lent twenty francs to the gentleman, who paid the bill but did not give her back her change, the dinner only costing nine francs ten sous. The gentleman offered her nothing more, but led her away on foot and left her quite early under the pretext that he had some writing to do for a grocer whose books he keeps. Then Maflée, who does not like to go in so early on a Sunday, put on a new cap and went to the Pilodo ball with a woman, a neighbor. Who should she find there but her new acquaintance, who was courting another woman and paying for punch for her with the rest of the twenty-franc piece she had lent him."

"Why, that was a pretty trick! and what did Louisette do?"

"Good heavens! she is so stupid, she simply went away crying. But the funny part of the story is that on the Sunday following he played her the same trick over again. They dined at a restaurant, and when the time came to pay the bill, my fine fellow was again without money."

"Oh, that was altogether too steep, and did she pay again?"

"Yes, but she paid the bill herself, and kept her change. Since that time she hasn't seen her borrowing friend again."

"Poor Louisette! but I don't pity her, she is too simple. And you, Rose, are you still with the same people?"

"The Duponts? oh, no, thank God! I've left them; they were nobodies, and that didn't suit me. Madame went to market herself, it was she who bought everything. Monsieur himself went down to the cellar; he kept count of his bottles. There was no way of getting round those people, beggarly things, my dear! They locked up the sugar and the liqueurs, and that didn't suit me. I only took the place while waiting for something better, I knew very well I should not stay long with them."

"Now, you have something better?"

"I've a delightful place, my dear, I am with a single gentleman, a rich man, generous, and not meddling; he does some business, but just because he likes it and to afford him occupation. We have a very fine apartment near here in the Rue Béranger, six rooms on the second floor. I made monsieur hire some one to polish the floors; he had no one before, but he understood well that I could not do everything."

"You have good wages?"

"Six hundred francs, without counting the perquisites, the presents."

"Your master makes you presents?"

"Why, yes, just lately he gave me a magnificent crêpe de chine handkerchief."

"How old is your gentleman?"

"He's a man bordering on sixty; but he doesn't look it, he is still quite good-looking."

"Oh, I understand — you are not there merely as a maid. Ha! ha! there are some good places."

"You think very foolish things. I assure you there's nothing of the kind."

"Well, what does he make you presents for?"

"Oh, I don't say he doesn't like to trifle sometimes, but it doesn't go so far as you imagine."

"Goodness, it doesn't matter to me — you have a right to do as you like, and your master too, as he's a bachelor. Is he a widower or single?"

"Faith, I don't know; I must find out."

"Goodness, I'm forgetting the draught and they're waiting for it, and I'm talking with you —"

"Why, there's no harm in talking a bit, we don't meet each other every day."

"All the same, I must run to the chemist's. Good-by, Rose."

"Good-by, Adrienne."

CHAPTER II

The Apothecary's Shop

There were a great many people in the apothecary's shop, which was almost at the corner of the Rue Meslée and the Rue du Temple, and the druggist's assistants did not know whom to serve first when Mademoiselle Adrienne entered. It is, for the matter of that, quite rare to find a pharmacy empty, in fact there is usually a crowd there seeking to find remedies, or at least the means of alleviating the sufferings of those dear to them. If that proves that the drug business is a good one, it also proves that we ourselves are constantly in need of repairs, and that we are far from being perfect; as for the latter, that is something of which we, and doubtless our readers also, have been convinced for a long time.

There was a good-natured fat woman in a round cap, who held by the hand a child of four or five years of age, who was so covered, so swathed in dresses, coats, aprons, and wraps that it was difficult to divine whether it was a boy or a girl; the mother addressed herself to one of the young druggists,—

"Monsieur, my little one has been coughing for

three days, as if he would rend his body from his soul, and they are fits of coughing like his late father had, who enjoyed a catarrh which kept me awake nights and that carried him off last year with a fit of indigestion, which he took after a vapor bath, because he —"

"Madame, it doesn't concern me to hear what your husband had, since he is dead, but your little boy has a cold and you came about him, I suppose?"

"Certainly, monsieur; wait, here he is, the jewel."

"Is that your little boy?"

"Yes, monsieur."

"I should have taken him for a little girl."

"Because he looks so cute? Yes, he is cute; but see how red he is."

"That isn't surprising, you cover him up too much, he is too warm with all that on."

"But, monsieur, see how he coughs."

"That's no reason for smothering him."

"What must I make him take, monsieur?"

"Why, madame, you must make him a drink to soften his cough—with sweet mallow and honey and add a little milk to it."

"Cow's milk, monsieur?"

"Why, certainly."

"Some one told me to make him take asses' milk."

"Why no, it isn't worth while—he is too young, he doesn't look as though he were consumptive."

"See if he has any fever, won't you, monsieur?"

The young man tried to take the little boy's hand, but he drew it back, uttering loud cries.

"Come, Dodore, why don't you let the gentleman take your hand? Give it him quick, you little rascal."

"I don't want to — yah!"

"He's as mischievous as a monkey. Put out your tongue for the gentleman."

"No! don't bother me!"

"Isn't he comical, hey?"

"But he's hardly respectful to you."

"Oh, monsieur, he is so young, and then he gets that from his father, who never answered me any other way. That recalls to me my poor dear. Will you give me the mallow and the honey, monsieur?"

"Yes, madame, immediately."

"And you don't think that the asses' milk would be better than cow's?"

"Why, no, madame, I repeat to you your little boy doesn't need it. But, of course, if you really want him to take it, it won't do him any harm."

"It won't, monsieur? Have you a donkey?"

"Oh no, madame, we don't keep asses' milk here."

"What a pity! I have a neighbor who has a goat, do you think goat's milk would do as well?"

"Any kind of milk you wish. Here's your mallow flower, and your honey, madame."

"Thank you, monsieur; must it be taken warm?"

"As warm as possible, madame; that is always better than cold."

"Dodore throw a kiss to the gentleman."

Instead of a kiss, the little boy made a face, put out his tongue, and muttered, "You bother me!" His mother led him out of the shop, exclaiming,—

"He's just exactly like his father."

A coquettishly dressed middle-aged lady with pretentious manners addressed another budding pharmacist, and assuming a simpering smile to let him see a full set of false teeth, which she believed to be so natural as to deceive the most shrewd, she said to him,—

"Monsieur, a very disagreeable event has transpired, and I should like you to remove the annoyance for me as quickly as possible."

"What is it you want removed, madame, a tooth? we are not dentists."

"Why, no, monsieur, it is no question of teeth; in that respect nothing is lacking to me, thank God, as you may very well see; but look above my mouth, monsieur, and tell me what you perceive there?"

"Why, I perceive your nose, madame, and that is where one usually finds it, I believe."

"Yes, monsieur, my nose is there, and the shape of it is good enough, I dare to say; but on my nose there — to the left, do you see nothing?"

"Oh, yes, I see a pimple; it is quite prominent already and also red."

"It is red and prominent; oh, monsieur, what does that mean?"

"It means that it isn't yet ripe, madame."

"Ripe? what do you mean by ripe? do you think that it should ripen, monsieur?"

"Why, of course; it is nothing but a pimple now, but even a pimple must run its course, ripen, whiten, burst, and heal —"

"Ripen, whiten; I shall have a white lump on my nose? oh, how horrid! I don't like that at all! I've never had the slightest blemish anywhere — anywhere, do you understand, monsieur; now, why should this pimple come on my nose? What can be the cause of it?"

"That I can't tell you, madame; a pimple comes without your knowing why, that may happen to anybody."

"Oh, no, monsieur, when one is strictly careful it should not happen. I have not been thrusting my nose into insalubrious neighborhoods, I beg you to believe."

"I am fully persuaded of that, madame."

"I wash my face twenty times a day. I rub my skin with cold cream and vinaigre de Bully, with Portugal water, with essence of jasmine —"

"Too many things, madame; you should not use too many cosmetics, that sometimes produces an effect quite other than the one that is expected."

"Then, monsieur, you will give me something to cause this pimple which has come on my nose to disappear; I cannot allow a pimple to be seen there."

"That will be rather difficult, madame — that will be dangerous even; we have to be careful about what we do with the nose. Have you seen your doctor?"

"A doctor! for a pimple! why, the idea. In the first place, I don't like doctors; they always want to physic me, and I abhor medicine."

"You are wrong, madame, a little simple medicine would probably have prevented this pimple from appearing on the end of your nose."

"With what can this pimple be rubbed so that it will disappear immediately? There must be some way of doing it, monsieur!"

"Madame, I warn you it will be dangerous; if you drive this pimple in, you will have a whole crop of them elsewhere!"

"Elsewhere! that is all the same to me, so long as they are not on the face."

"You wish to drive it in, madame?"

"Yes, I am going to a party tomorrow evening, and I wish to go there without this pimple."

"Here is some sugar of lead ointment, madame, that will dry up your pimple."

"Oh, thank you, I'll cover my nose with it."

"Apply it to the pimple only, but I forewarn you that it will cause you to have others."

"Very well, monsieur; we'll drive them all in."

The lady took her little pot of ointment, paid for it, and went off joyful at having what would cure, or at least hide, her pimple.

She was replaced by a young man, very well dressed but with a very bad countenance, who, after consulting one of the clerks in a private room behind the shop, departed, heaving a deep sigh, with a box of pills, a packet of roots, and a bottle of syrup already put up.

The young pharmacists looked one at the other smilingly, and one of them muttered,—

Ità dis placitum, voluptatem ut mœror
Comes consequatur !

"Messieurs, messieurs, be careful what you say," said the young man who was seated at the desk.

"Oh, monsieur, there's no danger, the ladies do not know Latin."

A stout fatherly man came in, all out of breath, and threw himself on a seat, saying,—

"Oh, monsieur, what suffering ! Deuce take it! what a twinge."

"Have you fallen, monsieur ?"

"No, oh, I haven't fallen ; nothing was lacking but that; but it's a twinge that attacks me from the hip to the knee on the right side."

"And did it take you while you were walking ?"

"Did it take me ? Why I've suffered from it for three weeks. I have done nothing for it because I kept saying to myself every day, 'This will pass

off' — but it did not pass off. That is why I decided to come."

"You would have done better had you come sooner."

"Oh, I don't care to be drugged. Prescribe truffles, lobster, champagne, well and good! I'll follow your prescription in short order."

"You have perhaps abused those things and that is why you suffer now. Have you consulted a doctor?"

"I've consulted ten, twelve, twenty of them. Whenever I've been in the neighborhood of a doctor I have consulted him."

"What did they tell you it was?"

"One said it was rheumatism; the other it was sciatica; another says gout and another fatigue. They all ordered me to be rubbed."

"With what?"

"With opodeldoc liniment, Tranquille balm, balm of Fioraventi! and a host of other liniments. I had some excellent rum, real Jamaica rum, and I thought I'd be rubbed with that."

"That wasn't a bad idea."

"No, it wasn't; but having no servant I asked my porter to come and rub me; he desired nothing better. I gave him my rum, and I lay down on the side that had no pain. The fellow rubbed me with all his might, and it hurt horribly, I can assure you; but he stopped quite often to rest, and once, happening to look round, I saw him drinking

the rum out of the bottle and that he was rubbing me dry — the scoundrel! I haven't had him rub me since. Can you get me a woman to rub me? I should like that much better than a man."

"We can give you a woman who puts on leeches and cupping glasses; she also rubs when necessary."

"Is she young?"

"Between fifty and sixty."

"I should have preferred one from twenty-five to thirty."

"What does it matter, provided she rubs you well? a younger person might distract you, it is true, but that isn't necessary."

"Oh, you don't think distractions would benefit my trouble."

"Not at all. Besides, you had better have cupping glasses applied, and some blistering flies."

"Oh, while I'm at it I don't care what I do, I am willing to use anything that will cure me quickest. Here's my address, and tomorrow morning you may send me the woman to rub me, with her leeches and her cupping glasses and her flies."

"Why, it isn't necessary to use all those remedies at the same time."

"I beg your pardon, I shall get well quicker so. Look you, I seldom doctor, but when I do I refuse nothing that may help me. Give me some kind of liniment that I may try to rub myself while awaiting your young woman."

While they were serving this gentleman, a woman with a fichu over her head came in, weeping and in sore distress, and ran to speak to the gentleman at the desk.

"Oh, my dear Monsieur Narcisse, what ill-luck, what wretched luck I've had for some time past. Hardly has my little girl got well of the grippe, and my boy of the measles, when here's my husband sick and can't work; this caps it all."

"What's the matter with your husband?"

"Why, a singular illness — but it seems that it is dangerous. Just think, he has caught an entracte.[1]"

"An entr'acte! what are you talking about?"

"I'm telling you what the doctor himself told me, and he's a learned man; why he said at once, 'Why, what's this — this is an entracte!' Well, after all, André is so fond of the play that he wants to be enrolled among the clappers; he spends all his money in buying theatre checks, and it's not astonishing that he should get an entracte, which holds him fast in the back."

"Oh, I understand now, your husband has an anthrax."

"Well, haven't I been telling you so for the last hour — an entracte in the back, that must be a sudden cold, don't you think?"

"Not exactly, but it is very bad — you ought to have a prescription."

[1] Entr'acte: Interval between the acts at the theatre.

"Yes, I believe you, I have, the doctor wrote this. Will it take long to make?"

"No; be seated for five minutes and they'll give you all that is necessary."

"Then I'll wait. But all the same, when his entracte gets cured, he'd better not talk to me of the play, André hadn't; I shall say to him, 'Why you wretch — you've had your back full of it.'"

An old lady came in looking frightened, she held a dog by a string and she exclaimed,—

"Messieurs, is it true that it's in Paris? has it already worked many ravages? is it very violent?"

"Pardon, madame, but in the first place of what are you speaking?"

"Why, of the cholera, monsieur; I have been assured that it is in Paris, that it has shown itself in the Faubourg Saint-Antoine."

"This is the first news of it, madame."

"Really! you've not heard it talked about?"

"Not the slightest bit in the world."

"What confirmed my alarm was that in passing by some public lavatories I noticed that they had been cleaning them with chloride of lime."

"That's often done to destroy bad odors —"

"Do you suppose that was the only object? I must tell you also that the husband of one of my friends has just died very suddenly."

"An apoplexy, perhaps."

"Oh, no, monsieur, he was not of a sanguine habit; why, he came home in the evening with a

lobster and a Lyons sausage, which was his favorite repast, he partook of them with beer, and ate heartily; the next morning he was dead, and was the color of his Lyons sausage."

"He had had indigestion, madame."

"Why, monsieur, he had several times eaten of the same things and had not died of it."

"These things, madame, never happen twice."

"Then my portress' little one, a child who was as fresh as a rose, has been ill for three days with—"

"Cholera infantum, children often have that; it's nothing uncommon."

"Then I've just met a gentleman who dined with me a fortnight ago, and he was very well then. I thought he was yellow, his eyes sunken, changed, in fact, to that degree that I could not help saying to him, 'Why, good heavens! what a face you have, you must be ill.' And he answered me, 'I don't know what is the matter with me, but I feel a slight degree of pain all over me.' Is that the way it would take him, monsieur?"

"No, madame, the gentleman probably had a slight attack of rheumatism — a stiffness in his joints — that is all."

"All the same, there is something peculiar in the air — something not natural. Why, monsieur, this morning I was almost cold when I got up, and now I am very warm."

"You've been walking quickly."

"Why, no; Zozor obliged me to stop at every

turn — this poor dog is no longer in his first youth. Monsieur, will you give me some camphor, I know that is a preservative against evil emanations."

"Yes; madame, I will give you some."

"I'll put a piece in my corset, that can do no harm."

"Quite the contrary, madame."

"Then you can give me some chloride of lime, that's a preservative too."

"Liquid or solid, madame."

"I don't understand, monsieur."

"Madame, solid it is in powder; liquid it is in a bottle — a prepared water."

"Ah, I didn't know it was sold solid. You can give me some of both, monsieur, I'll use them both; I will wash with one and wear the other. Oh, have you any cuscus, that's a preservative, too."

"That drives away insects, worms."

"Oh, monsieur, it's a safeguard against bad air as well. I'll put some of that in my corset, too, you may give me a package."

"Very well, madame."

"Then lavender, too, has recognized properties."

"Yes, madame, it is aromatic."

"Let me have some of it. I'll put it in my pockets. What else can you give me to guard me against the bad air? Ah, some patchouli — have you any patchouli?"

"No, madame, you will have to go to a perfumer's for that; why, patchouli, although it smells

good, is of no use against bad air, and sometimes is injurious to the nervous system, if used too freely."

"Oh, monsieur, I don't want anything that will affect my nervous system — that will agitate my nerves in the slightest!"

"Then, madame, take, rather, some valerian, it is a root with which you make an infusion like tea. But I must warn you that it is not pleasant to take, and that it smells bad, but it is very healthful."

"Give it me, monsieur, give it me as quickly as possible. I'll drink some and I'll wear some about me."

They gave the lady all she asked for; she stuffed her pockets and her corset with camphor, cuscus, chloride of lime, lavender, valerian and carried away a bottle of liquid chloride of lime, and shed upon her pathway as she went a mixture of odors that was anything but agreeable.

"If that lady hasn't a sick headache this evening she will be very fortunate," said one of the young men.

"To say nothing of the cats, that will run after her, attracted by the smell of the valerian, which almost makes them wild. If that lady doesn't like cats she will pass a very unpleasant time."

A working mason came into the shop, and showed his arm which was hurt; a piece of wood had almost fallen on him, but he had got off with a rather bad gash on his forearm. They dressed

it and bound up his arm, they gave him a flask of camphorated brandy to pour over his bandage, and when he wanted to pay they sent him away, saying,—

"Do you think we charge anything to a poor fellow that's hurt himself. Go and take care of yourself, and if you need anything more, don't fear to come and ask, for it will cost you nothing."

You must understand that when you see pharmacists so anxious to help the unfortunate, you should not allow yourself to call them — apothecaries.

Several little maids came in, all speaking at the same time, and saying,—

"Oh, do serve me at once, I'm in a great hurry."

"Monsieur, I've a cough, give me some marshmallow paste — it's very good is marshmallow — that's the kind of remedy I like."

"Monsieur, I have a sore throat."

"Gargle your throat with barley water and rose water —"

"Monsieur, madame wants some pomade for her lips — What does she use that pomade for? I never put any on and my mouth is fresher than hers."

"Monsieur, I've got a bump on the head and it hurts me."

"What did you bump it against?"

"Mercy! it was against a door. I was quite still and they opened it suddenly when I wasn't expecting it."

"You were probably listening?"

"I was listening just a little bit, because the magnetizer was there."

"And who is the magnetizer?"

"It's a gentleman that's teaching madame to become a clairvoyant, so she can make experiments in society."

"Ah, your mistress wants to be a clairvoyant."

"Yes, she's got that into her head; her husband has often told her, 'You'll make yourself ill.' But madame sticks to it, and when the magnetizer comes they send me away."

"And the husband?"

"Monsieur? Oh, he is at his office; he goes there at nine o'clock and comes home at five, that's the rule. They can arrange accordingly."

"I understand. Where is your bump?"

"There on my forehead — feel."

"Oh, yes, I feel it."

"Monsieur said to me, 'There's nothing to be done for bumps, they are not dangerous.' In fact he ought to know for —"

"Drink some vulnerary — that will be more prudent."

"Well, give me some, then."

The door opened again, a very strong odor was perceivable; it was the old lady of the preservatives, who had returned, saying,—

"Monsieur, I forgot to take some of Carmes' mint balsam water, that is indispensable when one

feels indisposed, one can rub the temples with it also — it is a preservative; give me a bottle of it, if you please."

"Here it is, madame."

"That is really genuine, is it not, monsieur? you would not deceive me — made by Carmes of the real Rue Taranne."

"Madame, I do not know of two of them in Paris."

"Thank you, monsieur."

This lady went off with her bottle, which she put in her pocket. Mademoiselle Adrienne, entered the pharmacy at last, exclaiming,—

"Here I am, lucky for me! I thought I should never get here."

"Is someone ill at your house, Mademoiselle Adrienne?"

"Goodness, yes, it's my mistress who has one of her nervous attacks, her fits, and she's all of a tremble. Here's her prescription, make up her draught quick. I'm in a great hurry to go. Try not to be long about it."

"Sit you down and we will make it up for you at once."

"You're very kind, for it makes me feel bad when I see my poor mistress suffer."

They were busied in making up the prescription for Madame Montémolly, when the door opened and an indescribable mixture of odors invaded the shop as the lady possessed of the fear of cholera

showed herself again and advanced towards the gentleman at the desk, exclaiming,—

"Ah, monsieur, you can't imagine how bad it smells as one goes up the Rue Meslée!"

"I am very sorry, madame, but what do you want me to do about it?"

"There is something in the air there, oh, I am quite sure the air is very bad just now."

"Perhaps it's a storm that is brewing."

"Oh, monsieur; it is brewing something besides a storm. Will you have the kindness to uncork my bottle of mint balsam. If you will allow me, I'll rub my nose and my temples with it, then I can at least brave the fear of the miasmas of the street.

"Done, madame; here is your bottle open; would you like a little cup?"

"The corner of my handkerchief will suffice—I'll wet it well."

In fact the lady poured the mint balsam on her handkerchief, then she rubbed her temples and bathed her nose in it, introducing her wet handkerchief as much into the nostrils as she could, she also rubbed her forehead and, pouring some of the mint-balsam into the hollow of her palm, snuffed at it till she made herself sneeze eight times in succession. At length, this ceremony being finished, she recorked the bottle, put it in her pocket, and went out, saying,—

"This time I think I am quite armed against the bad air."

"Oh, yes, madame, you are well preserved," cried the pharmacist. "I should like to think that we are now free of her visits for a time; what a customer!"

"Why, it is she who poisons the air," said Adrienne; "what have you given that lady?"

"Everything she wanted."

"What is her illness?"

"Her malady is fear, which is the most common illness there is, and sends us the most people. That lady is afraid of cholera; others are afraid of maladies of which they have not the slightest symptom, with which, however, they believe themselves to be threatened — fear never reasons! you would not believe how many customers it sends us."

"Oh, by Jove! here she is coming back again."

"Who?"

"Why, the lady who bought the preservatives."

"The idea! that's too much of a good thing. What! does she want to wash herself here again? — this is getting tiresome."

The lady who exhaled such a strong odor opened the door and paused on the sill, saying,—

"Pardon, messieurs, one question if you please; if I were to make use of tobacco that would act as a preservative, I suppose?"

"Yes, madame, certainly, use tobacco, use it freely — you will smell nothing else then."

"Will you give me some, then?"

"We don't sell tobacco, madame, neither to

snuff nor to smoke; but on this side, nearer the boulevard, you will find a tobacconist's without any trouble."

"I'll go and get some, I shall try the snuff first, then perhaps I'll risk a little cigar; the ladies smoke now, don't they, monsieur?"

"Yes, madame. Oh, yes, the ladies smoke, they do everything now that the men do; it doesn't make them beautiful, but it amuses them."

"As for me, monsieur, I don't take it with the design of improving my looks; it is to brave the bad air. I'm going to buy some tobacco."

"Go, madame, go!" said the young pharmacist closing the door after the lady, "take snuff, smoke, chew even if you like; but, please leave us in peace for a little. Wait, Mademoiselle Adrienne, here is the draught for your mistress."

"Thank you, monsieur, I will run and take it to her, it makes me feel bad when I see her suffer. Good evening, messieurs."

The young maidservant arrived at her dwelling without meeting any more of her acquaintances. She said, in passing, to the portress,—

"Here I am — I have the draught; I thought they would never serve me, there was such a crowd at the pharmacist's."

"Well, it isn't worth while for you to hurry so."

"Why not, Madame Bédou?"

"Because your mistress went out in a carriage with her friend quite a while ago."

"Madame, has gone out! there, I was sure of it! and then they scold a girl for not running to do her errands and deprive her of a few minutes talk with her acquaintances. I'll remember that the next time."

CHAPTER III

An Enslaved Young Man

Young Casimir Dernold occupied a very pleasant bachelor apartment on the third floor of a fine house in the Rue de Paradis-Poissonière. There was an antechamber, a small drawing-room and a bedroom. Everything was very fresh and clean, it was nicely decorated; the furniture, while not extremely elegant, was in good taste and still in the prevailing mode. In fact, everything indicated that the one who occupied this apartment was by no means a disorderly person.

However, the person who lived there, a bachelor of twenty-six, and who had a handsome face, a well-knit figure, irreproachable manners and faultless dress, was walking about his little drawing-room at this moment, looking very ill-tempered, sometimes striking his furniture with his cane or crushing his gloves angrily in his hand and talking out loud, as often happens to people who are strongly excited by some feeling; for, strangely enough, it seems to afford a solace to say what is in one's mind, even though there be no one there to hear it.

"No, no, it cannot go on thus. I must make

an end of it!" cried the young man, who struck a sofa with his cane which brought forth such a cloud of dust that he stopped short in his exclamation, to say to himself. "If that's the way the porter beats my furniture, he evidently does not exhaust himself — I am very tired of being Ambroisine's slave, for I am absolutely her slave. I can't take a step, go anywhere, but she must know it. I am sure she spies on me; it is because she loves me, she says; she loves me, yes, and I'm quite willing she should. I should think I ought to be, for I cost her enough. She buys me everything I desire, pays my tailor, my bootmaker, all my tradespeople. How should I pay them? I who do nothing, earn nothing, I who am good for nothing? Oh, well, if I do nothing, it is her fault. Every time I wish to look for employment she opposes it. Then, I want to get back to my painting; for I was beginning to get on well enough with my landscapes, and was also successful in painting some portraits — I tried on some of my friends; well, I should have kept on, but Ambroisine found a way to prevent my working, by taking me off to the country or into the woods, and obliging me to accompany her everywhere, to walk with her, take her to all sorts of festivals. In fact, she's always thinking of something, and all to monopolize me, to keep me dependent upon her. Nothing would suit her less than my earning money, because then I might detach

myself from her, be no longer in her toils. And I, cowardly, idle, greedy, loving pleasure and good cheer, allow myself to be inveigled by that woman, whom I rather liked — in the beginning ; and after that I had not the force of will to refuse her services, and, once on this incline, it is difficult to stop, above all, when one is, as I said, an idler, a gourmand, and a lover of ease. Oh, young men should take heed what connections they form — for such things as these influence their whole future. Have two, three, a dozen mistresses if your means allow you, but do not attach yourself to any of them — for that it is which will make you commit blunders and throw away your future. Those whom they call heedless, wild fellows are the most reasonable ; they don't allow themselves to be put in cotton, but at least they keep their free will. No, no, for three years I've been Madame Montémolly's cicisbeo, and I've had enough of it."

M. Casimir gave another stroke of his cane to one of the armchairs ; and raised such a dust that he was half blinded and obliged to retreat to the other end of the room.

"That scoundrel of a porter," he muttered, "is it possible he gives so little care to my furniture? And he asserts that he passes half the day in doing up my rooms. Oh, if Ambroisine knew I was giving drawing lessons to a young lady in this house she would be furious. However, it is quite innocent. Mademoiselle Angélina Proh is neither an

ugly nor a pretty girl, and is stupid rather than witty; but I think that runs in the family. She lives with her father and mother and her little brother, on this story, opposite me. This Proh family are extremely polite to me; the mother, who is quite coquettish, is always saying to me,—

"'You paint, monsieur; oh, I should so much like to have my portrait, if you are not too dear, I beg you to paint it for me — but in oils and colors, for I detest photography, it makes one look so much uglier, I think.'

"'Madame, I am sorry, but I don't think I am far enough advanced to paint portraits from nature.'

"'Oh, you are a great deal too modest, you must try, monsieur; we are neighbors, and I will pose for you only when you have some time to yourself.'

"Time to myself! I always have it — when Ambroisine is willing that I should, that is. Then Papa Proh, who is, I believe, a former professor of Greek and Latin, proposed that I should give his daughter some drawing lessons, and his son also, when he is old enough. By Jove, I accepted. Twenty-five francs a month, it isn't any great thing, but I couldn't say with what a feeling of joy, of happiness, I received that money that I'd earned by my own work. I felt quite proud. Why that twenty-five francs afforded me a hundred times as much pleasure as a roll of gold put in my pocket by Ambroisine, and then afterwards I have to give an exact account of what I did with that gold.

"Today I ought to go and call for her at eight o'clock, to take her to a café concert. She chose the one which tempted her, but, by Jove! it doesn't tempt me at all; and then for a long time past I've longed to go to Mabille to see the ladies who dance with so much distinction — I've written and told her that my friend Miflaud has an affair of honor for tomorrow morning, that he is expecting me to be his second, and that it is absolutely necessary that I should go and see him this evening to come to an understanding with him and the other second as to the conditions of the duel and the motive of the quarrel. But can I take her in with this bouncer? hum, I don't feel quite so sure as to that; the important thing is that Miflaud, who was to come to Mabille with me, should not keep me waiting here too long. When once we have started, if Ambroisine should send here they won't find me.

"Let's see the time. Why, it's eight o'clock already and that idiot Miflaud was to have been here between seven and half-past. Fortunately, I sent my letter to Ambroisine late enough for it not to reach her before eight. I must expect a scene tomorrow, I suppose. But when she sees that I get really angry, why, then, she is easily pacified — she's not bad at bottom, but she's too jealous, a great deal too jealous — a veritable Andalusian. Thank heaven! she doesn't carry a stiletto in her garter. There's the bell, that's Miflaud —"

Casimir ran to open the door, but instead of the young man he expected, he saw before him a little boy of six years, who said to him,—

"Monsieur Casimir, mamma sent me to see if you were in."

"You see I am in, little Alphonse, and what does your mamma, Madame Proh, want of me?"

"The dressmaker has sent her home a beautiful new gown, red and green stripes, and mamma has put it on and she wants you to see it, so you can tell her if you would like to paint her in it."

"Why, youngster, I'm not ready to paint your mamma's portrait— I shall have plenty of time to see her gown."

"Yes, yes, you must come, she told me, 'Beg our neighbor to come in for a moment — I want him to see me in this gown.'"

"Why, I'm expecting some one to call for me. Oh, I can leave my door open. Come, march my little Phonphonse. Isn't your papa there."

"No, he's just gone out, after telling mamma that her striped gown made her look like a giraffe."

"Hang it! that would not please Madame Proh."

"Then she said to papa, 'You don't need to be dressed to look like a mandrill.' M. Casimir, what is a mandrill that papa looks like?"

"My dear boy, it is — by Jove — a mandrill is a man of the woods — a very fine man of the woods, in fact, it is a quadrumane."

"And what is a quadrumane?"

"It's a man who uses his feet like hands."

The appearance of Madame Proh put an end to her son's questions, this lady having come as far as the door to meet her neighbor. Celeste Proh was a woman of forty-seven years, fair and rather insipid, with china blue eyes and not the merest scrap of an eyebrow above them; she was obliged to make fictitious ones with a paint brush which she dipped in a composition, the color of which was not always what she hoped it would be, so this lady had an arch above each eye, sometimes black, sometimes chestnut, and sometimes red; but that gave piquancy to her physiognomy; she believed herself to be excessively pretty, with an expression almost younger than that of her daughter, who was sixteen. She often repeated in conversation that she did not understand her husband, who had never cared to have a portrait of his wife, with which he ought to have adorned every room in his apartment.

Madame Proh, in fact, had on a new gown with wide stripes of vivid red and bright green, which gave her almost the look of a flowering shrub, and attracted the eye fifteen feet away. She advanced smiling towards her neighbor.

"I beg your pardon a thousand times, M. Casimir, I hope I have not been indiscreet in sending Phonphonse to you; but I wanted your opinion of this gown — how do you like it?"

"I think it very handsome, it is original and made very becomingly — in fact it can be seen from a distance."

"I like that, I like anything that attracts people's notice. Do you think it becoming to me?"

"You look like an angel in it; and it fits you perfectly."

"I like to be well-fitted. As for that, I'm not at all restrained in my movements. Then you will paint me in this gown, won't you?"

"You still insist on my painting your portrait, then, madame?"

"Why, most assuredly."

"I told you that I did not think myself qualified to paint a portrait from nature."

"You painted the porter's cat — I've seen it there in his lodge."

"That was merely an attempt — to amuse myself."

"Well, you can amuse yourself also by attempting to draw me. You are too modest, M. Casimir. You are too distrustful of your ability; the porter's cat is a speaking likeness, and she did not pose long, I suppose."

"She did not pose at all, I did it from memory."

"Well, I will pose as long as you like. M. Proh wanted to have me photographed, but I wouldn't have it; I detest photography, it makes one look uglier and older than one really is — but it is cheap, and that's why everybody uses it. But say what

you may, painting is the thing, it has life, expression, color."

"I am entirely of your opinion, madame."

"Won't you come in and sit down for a little while?"

"Thank you, but I am expecting some one and I must go in."

"Then this gown pleases you, and you can paint me in it?"

"I will paint you in any costume you like, as Diana hunting if that tempts you."

"Why, that's quite an idea, that is. Diana as a huntress, why that would be distinguished!"

"Good evening, madame, your servant."

"Neighbor, where can I find the costume of that goddess of the chase?"

But Casimir did not answer his neighbor, for he had already shut his door, saying as he did so,—

"That Madame Proh is dreadfully tiresome. If I did not wish to give her children lessons, I should long ago have sent her and her portrait to the devil. Let's see if this Miflaud is coming, it will soon be half-past eight, I've a good mind to go without him. But to go alone to Mabille isn't at all amusing."

Five minutes passed by, and then the bell rang violently; the young man ran to open the door and Madame Montémolly entered, looking furiously angry, all out of breath and in a perspiration, because she had come upstairs too quickly. You have learned through Mademoiselle Adrienne,

that her mistress, who gave herself out as thirty-four, must have been almost thirty-eight. We will add to this portrait that she was a tall, handsome, graceful woman with a good carriage, who showed off her dress to good advantage. She was a brunette, whose large eyes were not always soft and gentle in their expression, and whose mouth, which was rather compressed, was often disdainful and proud; but when she wished to be amiable she was a pretty woman of the true Andalusian type; she only lacked, to be a perfect Spaniard, a high comb under a veil and castanets in her hand.

This lady came in without a pause, without even saying a word to the person who opened the door to her; she immediately crossed the drawing-room to the bedroom to look everywhere to make sure no one was hidden there, and only after a complete inspection did she return to throw herself on to a sofa in the drawing-room, exclaiming,—

"Ah, you weren't expecting me, were you?"

"Really," answered Casimir, seating himself with the expression of a person who had been struck on the head by a tile, "it is quite by chance that you find me still here. I should have been at Miflaud's by this if he hadn't written me again to say he would come here himself—that he should like it much better in fact; because, as he lives with his mother, he feared lest she should find out he was going to fight a duel, and then—"

"M. Casimir, how long is this going to last—

these impossible fictions? Do you imagine I believe all the stories you tell me—and tell very badly sometimes."

"Why, madame, there's not the slightest deception about this. What do you find surprising in the fact that one of my friends should have an affair of honor? that happens every day. He begged me to be his second, and I couldn't refuse him."

"In the first place, you haven't spoken of your friend Miflaud for a long time; it seems to me that you haven't seen him very lately."

"Not seen him lately! how can I when I'm incessantly with you; but our friendship is not broken off."

"You were to pass the evening with me."

"There's nothing remarkable in that, I pass them all so."

"And with whom would you pass them? You wrote me, 'Don't expect me this evening'; that was an amiable thing to do."

"Well, it was only to oblige Miflaud — But so much the worse for him. I shan't wait for him. Come, let us go and take a walk."

"Oh, you are in a great hurry to start now, you are afraid he won't come. This hides some perfidy, it is not Miflaud you are expecting."

"Yes, it is he; but since you have taken the trouble to come, he may go to the devil! Look here, Ambroisine, I am at your orders. I hope that will please you, let us go down."

"Oh, you are in too much of a hurry to go out — that is not natural, you are deceiving me!"

Casimir rose angrily and walked about the room, saying,—

"This is too much! to the devil with women and their obstinacy! A man wants to go out without them, they complain; he is quite willing to stay with them, and they complain again. No matter what one does they are always complaining and clamoring. Oh, I've had enough of such scenes as these. Good-by, madame, do just as you like, I'm going to get out of it!"

The young man had already taken some steps towards the door; but Ambroisine had darted with the rapidity of a greyhound, she held him, she enfolded him in her arms, looked at him lovingly and said to him, with tenderness this time,—

"Where are you going, ungrateful fellow? do you want to abandon me? Why, you know very well I can't live without you — that you are my happiness, my soul, my life. You make a crime of my coming here? was it not quite natural that I should wish to assure myself that you did not receive another woman? or that you were not going to meet one somewhere?"

"You can see very well that I have not got one hidden here — that would be very difficult, for you've been everywhere."

"No, but perhaps you expect one."

"Again, oh, you are terrible!"

"No, no, I was wrong, my dear, I am unjust, I won't be so again."

"Well, all right; now we'll go out for a walk."

Casimir was in a hurry to get out, because he was afraid now lest the arrival of his friend Miflaud should make his lies known. But while promising not to be jealous any more, Ambroisine, who still had some doubts, some suspicions, found a means of avoiding a prompt departure; first it was her bonnet that had not been put on right, then the hair of which her chignon was composed was not firm, she must readjust all that; her lover was on thorns; he had put on his hat and held his cane in his hand, but his mistress still had to put some pins in somewhere. In fact, what he had expected happened; some one rang the door-bell.

He made but one bound from the drawing-room to the entrance door in order to try and forewarn his friend; but quick as he was, Ambroisine arrived at the same time as he, after throwing to the winds the pins she was holding.

It was indeed Miflaud, a young business man about the same age as Casimir, but not so handsome, although he had rather an original face; he was very fond of grisettes, white wine and prawns; he was not too well favored on the side of intellect, but was always ready to amuse himself, to laugh, and to play jokes, provided he was not obliged to originate them.

"Good evening, Miflaud, you've come about

your duel, I suppose,— for you are to fight one tomorrow, and I am to be your second. But I'm sorry for it, my dear fellow, you will have to look for another, for I have business tomorrow, you understand?"

All this had been said by Casimir in one sentence; he had not stopped to take breath. Any other but Miflaud, one of those jokers with whom he consorted so much, would have understood the situation, above all, when he saw the big eyes and the signs that his friend tried to make to him; but Miflaud was not shrewd, and while Madame Montémolly was looking anxiously at him, he assumed an astonished expression, as he answered,—

"Me! I fight a duel tomorrow! Ha! the idea! that's good, that is. I don't understand anything about it. It must be a joke."

"See here, Miflaud, it's not worth while to hide it — madame knows all, I have told her everything; she won't say anything about it to your mother. Good evening — we are going out."

"But, first of all, I should very much like to know what you mean by talking about a duel."

"Monsieur has, however, done the best he could to make you understand!" said Ambroisine, casting a furious glance at Casimir; "he evidently wanted to put you in possession of the facts, that you might not deny the untruths he has been telling me — but he has taken needless trouble; he can't catch me quite so easily as that. Come, now,

M. Miflaud, don't rack your head nor trouble yourself to guess what signified the signs that your friend was making. You have not the slightest idea of a duel, you will not fight one tomorrow, and I am delighted that it is so for your sake."

"You are very kind, indeed, madame; it is certainly the fact that I have no intention of fighting tomorrow or even the day after."

"And you came to call for this gentlemen to go with him — to some common dance hall, no doubt?"

"Oh, don't bother yourself — since with madame there is no way of taking a step or having the slightest pleasure without her permission. Well, since you must know it, we were going to pass an hour at Mabille. That is not a crime! but you are so ridiculous, so jealous, that you see harm in everything, and you force me to lie to avoid your scenes of jealousy — only with you it is impossible to avoid them."

"To Mabille, you want to go to Mabille? How horrid! it's the abode of perdition. One knows very well what kind of amusement men seek there."

"But, madame, you are mistaken," remonstrated M. Miflaud; "Mabille is a garden frequented by the best people, by the most distinguished foreigners, by very pretty women."

"By cocottes! you might as well say the word right out at once."

"But there are no cocottes there — all the ladies

who go there are dressed in the latest fashions, and some of them dance with a grace, an ease of manner that is charming. I assure you it is a very curious sight."

"Oh, I'm doubtful whether it is to see that kind of thing that you go there."

"But as Casimir, it seems now, has something to say to you, madame, I imagine we shan't go, so I am off."

"Yes, yes, we are going there, I wish to go there," exclaimed Casimir, rising quickly. "It shall not be said that I am not free to do as I like. Come, Miflaud, we'll go and take a cab."

"Oh, so you really want to go to Mabille," said Madame Montémolly, hastening to get her shawl; "well, then, messieurs, I will accompany you there. I daresay M. Miflaud won't refuse to give me his arm."

"No, madame, only too happy to be your escort."

"Oh, my gloves, I was forgetting them."

While Ambroisine returned to the bedroom to look for her gloves, M. Miflaud whispered to Casimir,—

"It won't be very amusing with her—"

"It's your fault, you idiot!" answered Casimir, "if you had comprehended my signs, she would have believed in the duel, and would have let me go out with you."

"By Jove — I'm not quick at pantomime."

Ambroisine came, gloves in hand, and started with the two young men. Casimir did what he could to conceal his ill-humor; his mistress looking at him with a half-ironical, half-threatening expression.

CHAPTER IV

A Private Breakfast. Handsome Roufland

Casimir was at his mistress' house the next day at noon, seated at a table upon which a fine breakfast was served, opposite Madame Montémolly, with whom he had become reconciled at the close of the evening at the Mabille ball, which had passed without a new scene.

Our worthy friend Miflaud had given himself up to his passion for the dance and had soon left Ambroisine's arm, and she naturally had taken Casimir's; but the latter, having not the slightest inclination for the cancan even in its mildest form, had contented himself with watching Miflaud's miracles of agility and audacity as he executed the "tulipe orageuse" and other dances in vogue in eccentric quadrilles; then, softened by the sighs that Ambroisine breathed as she squeezed his arm, by the expressive looks which had succeeded to the angry ones she had darted at first — by the words, "You no longer love me, then," which were pronounced in an almost supplicating voice, he answered her by a gentle pressure of her arm, and looked at her smiling, and peace was made. It was not, perhaps, a very lasting or a very

substantial peace — but it was, nevertheless, a reconciliation.

Madame Montémolly had donned a charming morning déshabillé which brought out the contours of her fine figure; she wore nothing on her head but her beautiful, very dark hair, which she knew how to arrange in such a fashion as to harmonize with her physiognomy, a talent which hairdressers do not always possess, for they dress the hair according to their own idea without caring whether it suits the face or not. Ambroisine was still a very attractive woman, of whom many men would have esteemed themselves fortunate to win the heart; but just now it was she who sought to please her lover and to weave new chains in order to captivate him still further. The rôles were exchanged; it was madame who paid little attentions and did the courting; it was monsieur who accepted them and who was willing to allow himself to be loved.

"My dear, will you not have some more of this potted foie gras," said Ambroisine to Casimir as she waited on him. "Do you not think it good?"

"Delicious, perfect! but I've already helped myself to it."

"What of that? haven't you any appetite?"

"On the contrary, I have an enormous one and it seems to me that it speaks for itself; I am doing honor to your breakfast."

"What do you think of this chambertin?"

"It's excellent — I am tempted to quote a scrap

from the 'Nouveau seigneur de village': 'It is a most excellent wine! it is ten years old, and there's a dozen of it.'"

"I have some madeira just returned from India that my wine merchant recommends; you must tell me what you think of it."

"I am persuaded beforehand that I shall think very well of it indeed — you always have delicious wines."

"Yes, I am satisfied with my tradespeople. Take some lobster salad."

"That's what I am doing."

"Some olives — some tunny?"

"Presently, presently, we have plenty of time; you are not going out this morning, are you?"

"Me! the idea; where should I go when you are with me — when I have you here beside me in my home. Ah, I am so happy, then, that I should like to remain always thus."

"Let us try a little of this famous madeira which has voyaged to India. Ha! what a fine color and how clear it is. Hum, a fine bouquet; that doesn't smell of brandy, like spurious madeira. To your health, dearest!"

"To yours, you heedless boy! and don't tell any more such fibs as you did yesterday."

"What! are you going to hark back to that again. After all, it wasn't a capital crime. Everybody goes to Mabille, and it is possible to be quite virtuous there."

"Yes, but it is hardly necessary to dance as your friend Miflaud did; he dislocated himself."

"What can you expect, he aspires to a reputation something like that of the famous Chicard!"

"Fortunately, you are not fond of dancing."

"If I did like it, I beg you to believe that would be no reason why I should abandon myself to such very unconventional saltatory exercise."

"Here is some grilled salmon, which will be very good with that sauce Genevoise."

"What the deuce! Salmon, too; and I've eaten so much already. So much the worse, I must do my duty."

"You don't drink."

"I do nothing else."

"We have some champagne rosey; you like it, I think?"

"By Jove! I like all wines when they are good — as I love all women."

"What, monsieur, you love all women?"

"Pardon me — when they are good — and I assure you that does not bind me to much."

"You bad fellow — do you think all women wicked?"

"Yes, in general, but there are some exceptions."

"That is very fortunate, and am I an exception?"

"By Jove! you take advantage of my position — you make me drink a great variety of wines, and then put insidious questions to me!"

"Come now, monsieur, answer; am I good?"

"Ha! ha! ha!"

"It's no laughing matter! I want you to tell me if I am good."

"Merely from your manner in putting that question to me, one might suppose otherwise! But no, reassure yourself — you are good, you are a sheep, a lamb! You never get angry."

"I believe you are mocking me, my dear!"

"No, oh, no; frankly, I think you good, when you are not under the domination of jealousy, which sometimes spoils your disposition."

"Is that my fault? I should not be so jealous if I loved you less."

"Yes, that is what you always say; but I don't doubt your feeling for me in the least. You have given me proofs of your affection, you have given me too many of them even — and how can I ever repay you."

"Be silent, I beg of you! you are going to say foolish things now. Drink, that is much better worth while. The champagne is waiting for you. Come, monsieur, you must keep me in countenance; this is my favorite wine — drink my health."

"I wish you good health, my dear Ambroisine; yes, I drink, but that does not prevent me from telling you that in the depths of my heart I am far from pleased at myself. I do nothing and I lack for nothing, you fly to meet my wishes, you pay all my tradespeople, it is odious, and it cannot go on!"

"Really, Casimir, I don't know what is the matter with you today — but you cause me a good deal of pain. Why, my friend, between two persons who love each other truly, should not everything be in common? pleasure as well as sorrow? poverty as well as riches? If I had not a sou, if I wanted for everything, do you suppose that I should blush that you did your duty, shared your fortune with me or because I lived on the benefits you bestowed upon me?"

"Oh, a woman is quite different, that is her part, her lot; she is born to be protected, succored, maintained by man; she was made from one of his ribs, therefore she is a part of himself. But man is born to work, to earn money — or to lose it when he is unsuccessful in his enterprises. And when he passes his time in idling, in doing nothing but amuse himself at a woman's expense, it is the world turned upside down."

"Oh, how cruel you are! And all those who are born to fortunes, estates, châteaux — have they any need to work?"

"No, but they are under no necessity of having their tradespeople paid by the woman they court."

"Why, my dear, every day men who have nothing marry women who bring them considerable fortunes. Nor are they ashamed to receive their dowries. You see men very often who owe all their possessions, their fortune, to their wives, and who spend and dissipate all with their mistresses. Why,

therefore, should you think yourself so blamable while those men are so well esteemed in society?"

"Oh, my dearest, there is a great difference there; the man who has become the husband of a rich woman, has been deemed worthy of being connected to her by indissoluble bonds — in fact she bears his name. The husband becomes the master of the household. That is very different; then he can act, can arrange and dispose of a fortune which has become his own."

Madame Montémolly made no reply; she had listened attentively to her lover's last words and her brow became gloomy, while Casimir poured himself a glass of champagne which he drank in little sips, finding it greatly more agreeable to do so than to drink it all down at once, and we are exactly of his opinion; we can't see what advantage there is in making a funnel of one's throat.

However, surprised at his mistress' silence, and at the anxious expression which had replaced the pleasure that shone in her eyes, when he had finished his champagne Casimir said to her,—

"What is the matter with you, my dearest, that you look so grave? do you feel ill?"

"Ah, Casimir, what you have just said has spoiled my happiness."

"What have I said that would do that?"

"Nothing but what is very true — but I understood you very well, my dear; and what you wished to impress upon me is, besides, quite natural."

"What is it I wished to impress upon you? I assure you that I don't know what you mean at all!"

"You pretend not to understand me. In speaking of women who enrich a man by marrying him, you wished to say to me, 'Why don't you do the same, if you expect to see me enjoy your fortune without remorse.'"

"Me? That thought never entered my mind; I swear to you that you are quite mistaken. I said what I did without any intention such as you suppose."

"Why, my dear, even had you done so where is the harm? Don't you suppose that for a long time past I may have said to myself, 'How happy it would make me to be his wife; how proud I should be to bear his name!' and had it been possible should I not have already entreated you to bind yourself to me by an indissoluble tie. If I, alas! had not done that which makes it impossible. Come, my dear, I wish no longer to have any secrets from you. I told you I was a widow, but it is not so! I am married and my husband is still living."

"By Jove! is it possible? why, I must have another glass of champagne, then. So this dear fellow Montémolly is living?"

"My dear, that is not my husband's name; in separating from a man whom I had never loved, and with whom I found it impossible to live,

I hastened to drop his name in the hope of forgetting that I was still his wife."

"You were in the right to do so. And what is this gentleman's occupation? But if it displeases you to speak further of him, pray say no more. I beg of you not to trouble yourself, let it rest there."

"No, my dear, since I have begun, I would much rather tell you now how the marriage came about and why it was broken."

"Speak — your champagne is delicious, I am all ears."

"I am going to confess something — that I have as yet told to no one; but I do not wish to have the slightest secret from you."

"Do not tell me unless you really wish I should know; I ask nothing of you."

"That is precisely why I want to tell you everything, my dear. At eighteen I was very pretty."

"I can deuced well believe that! you are so still, and always will be."

"Hold your tongue! I had no relatives except one aunt, who was far from amicable and who scolded me incessantly, but did not watch over me as she should have done. A young man saw me at my window and fell in love with me. He won my maid to his interests, and she introduced him to my room when my aunt had gone out. This young man was a very handsome fellow; in short —"

"Very well, the rest is easily guessed, let us pass over the details."

"But this young man was a soldier and he was obliged to leave, to rejoin his army — for it was in time of war. When he departed my fault had had its consequences."

"Devil take it, that complicated matters."

"I wrote and imparted the fact of my situation to my lover; he answered and assured me that on his return he would hasten to repair his fault by marrying me. But alas! he did not come back! he was killed in the first engagement."

"Poor fellow! that left you in a very embarrassing position — what about your aunt?"

"It was impossible for me to longer hide my situation; she of course made a great fuss and clamor; but as the fortune I possessed came to me from my mother, and as I was richer than my aunt, who, if I had left her, would have had to live in a very much more modest fashion, she was pacified. I went to the country, where we rented a cottage in the neighborhood of Montmorency; it was there that my daughter was born, and I confided her to a country woman of Pierrefitte."

"In all this I don't see where your husband comes in."

"Wait a little — you will see that very soon. After my return to Paris I often went to Pierrefitte to see my baby. This displeased my aunt, who repeated constantly that I should compromise myself and that I should be unable to find a husband unless I acted more prudently. I did not listen

to her, but continued to go and see my daughter, who was a delicate child, but was doing well. Unfortunately it was not the same with myself; my health depreciated every day, so rapidly that the doctors prescribed a visit to Italy or at least a long stay at Nice. I left with my aunt, after charging the nurse to take good care of my daughter. I remained some months at Nice, but my health did not improve. I was advised to live in Naples for a time. I went there, but my aunt having business in Paris, left me for some time. I besought her to go and see my child and assure herself that it wanted for nothing.

"When my aunt returned to me at Naples she told me that my baby was dead, and that the peasant with whom I had left it, distracted by this misfortune, had quitted Pierrefitte without telling any one where she was going to live. I was greatly afflicted at the loss of my child. I had been so happy in having a daughter and had rested all my future hopes on her. My aunt did her best to alleviate my sorrow, we travelled about for a long time; I visited the whole of Italy and a part of Switzerland.

"At length, my health being re-established, we returned to settle ourselves in Paris. There, a rich gentleman—amiable enough, at least he did his best at that time to be so, came to pay court to me; he was an old friend of my aunt's and I have every reason to believe for a long time past she had prom-

ised to do her best to lead me to consent to marry him. This gentleman was older than I, but my aunt asserted that this would render me happier; that a young husband soon got tired of his wife and ran after other women, while a husband who had come to a reasonable age paid all sorts of little attentions to his young wife. How shall I tell you — I thought I should never again love anyone, I had lost my child, and so I married that I might have a house of my own and no longer live with my aunt, to whom my intended husband had made a present of a pretty little house in the neighborhood of Paris.

"But it was not long before I saw that I had committed a blunder and had allied myself with a man who did not suit me at all. My husband was meddling, jealous, curious — as far as money was concerned I had no need of applying to him at all. That vexed him, for he would have liked to know how I spent my money; I advised him not to meddle with my affairs, and that was the beginning of our quarrels. But this gentleman who wanted to know everything was mean enough to search everywhere during my absences, I think he had duplicate keys to all my receptacles. Certain it is, that he one day found in a little coffer at the back of my desk the letters written to me by poor Auguste while he was with the army, and in which he spoke of our child. You may well imagine, my friend, that my husband made a dreadful scene, telling me that I

had unworthily deceived him in allowing him to believe that I was a — 'Joan of Arc'! I answered him that even in that case he had been only too fortunate that I had consented to become his wife, but that I would live no longer with a man who foraged in my receptacles and was guilty of the meanness of reading letters I had received before I bore his name. The next day I executed my threat; I rented an apartment. My husband wanted to oppose my departure; but I showed him a revolver I had bought, and I said to him, 'Not only do I leave you, monsieur, but I forbid you — do you understand, monsieur, I forbid you ever to enter my presence again; the law authorizes you to do so, I know, because we are not legally separated, which we can be tomorrow, if you like; but as we are already separated financially by our marriage contract, I think we can dispense with that formality. Only, I repeat to you, never dare to come near me; if you do I will receive you with this revolver.' My husband is very cowardly — since that day I have never seen nor heard of him."

"Bravo, you are a plucky woman! And did you go back to live with your aunt?"

"With my aunt! oh, never! I had had quite enough of my aunt, who had made this odious marriage. I broke with her also; she wanted me to return to my husband, but I answered her in a tone which showed her that I was no longer a girl submissive to her will. As for that, she died some time

after the separation of a sudden malady which carried her off in a few days; she had written to ask me to go and see her; she had, she said, something important to tell me. I hesitated; I said to myself, 'She is going to ask me to return to my husband again,' but at length I decided to go to her. When I reached her country house it was too late, she was dead. These, my dear Casimir, are all the events of my life—you now know why, to my great regret, I cannot offer to marry you."

"Why, my dear Ambroisine, as for me I frankly confess that I have never thought of it at all, marriage does not tempt me in the slightest—it frightens me—you are well aware that it has been called the tomb of love."

"Oh, not always—but it is certainly—you think me too old to become your wife, no doubt?"

"Me! I haven't thought of it at all; no, I've been thinking of doing something, of getting to work!"

"To work! and to what purpose may I ask? For what reason?"

"Why, to earn some money."

"Am I not your cashier?"

"That is exactly the reason; I prefer to be my own cashier. I can already paint sufficiently well in oils, and I have also done several portraits which resembled their originals."

"Paint portraits! is that what you are thinking of—to have models, to look women in the eyes,

to study their smiles, their glances? I will not have you paint portraits, do you hear — I forbid you!"

"And landscapes? they are quite harmless, surely."

"Nothing is ever innocent with painters, for landscapes they have to go to the country to seek for points of view, or sheep, and the shepherdesses who lead them."

"Yes, and the shepherdesses in the neighborhood of Paris are so pretty — and graceful, like the women who let chairs in the parks."

"Leave me in peace — with your painting."

"Would you rather that I should write plays for the stage? it must afford great pleasure to see one's pieces played and to hear them applauded."

"Write plays! that would be horrid! a playwright passes his life on the stage, in the wings, with actresses who pay court to him, and he has to listen, and to promise them good parts; you would never leave the wings, you would pass your life there. Oh, my dear, I beg of you, don't think for a moment of writing for the stage."

"Well, then, suppose I write a novel? That would not exact much going about; one could write quietly in one's study. I sometimes have very original ideas — I can perhaps write an amusing novel — a realistic novel."

"A novel — a novel! I have heard it said a hundred times that to write a novel it is necessary to have seen a good deal, to have run about, to

have been in the places one wishes to describe — above all to write a realistic novel; why if you were to write on extraordinary topics you could invent them."

"No, I prefer realistic to extraordinary topics."

"Then, my dear, you can very well see that you will be unable to work quietly in your study; you will have to go about and sometimes into very risky neighborhoods; to those balls where they perform all sorts of dances; on the pretext of seeing how they work in factories and workshops you will visit flower-makers, milliners, and underwear establishments, there is no end to them—that will be in order to study the habits of the different classes of society. God knows all one may see when trying to study manners and customs. No, take my advice, don't write a novel; besides, I don't think that is your vocation."

"Ah, if I could only find or invent something good, useful — something that would cover me with glory and make my fortune."

"You are at perfect liberty to do so!"

"What a pity the potato is known, I should perhaps have discovered it."

"Yes, but it is perfectly known, my dear; you need not rack your head to invent something."

"I repeat to you that I wish to have occupation."

"Well, good heavens, if you positively wish it I will look for a position for you."

"You? and where, may I ask?"

"In one of the ministries, people go to the offices not too early and come away not too late —it is not very fatiguing."

"That would really be very pleasing to me! but how do you hope to obtain that for me?"

"I shall see, I'll look about among my acquaintances; it seems to me there is no hurry. Why, there's Florentine, she has a cousin who is head of an administration, she will speak to her cousin. Poor Florentine! How ungrateful I am; when one loves a certain person so much one forgets everybody else! But you turn my head — you make me foolish!"

"What is the matter now?"

"Why, Florentine came here yesterday evening, when I received your letter; she came to offer to share her box at the Opéra with me; but when I had read your unkind letter I had a terrible nervous attack; this poor Florentine cared for me, but she did not know what to give me, she sent my maid in search of the draught I habitually take when my nerves are in that condition; but my maid didn't come back and I regained consciousness. I said to Florentine, 'Let us go — I must get to his house.' I had a carriage ordered and Florentine was kind enough to accompany me to your door; she even wanted to wait for me, would have sacrificed for me the pleasure she expected to have at the Opéra — but I would not allow her

to do that, I sent her back. Well, it seems to me that is a true friend, and that I have reason to be really fond of her."

"Yes, yes, and I don't say otherwise; she is very much attached to you, but—she is devilishly ugly."

"Ah, that is just like the men! and what matter if she is ugly, monsieur? so long as she possesses all the qualities of the heart; but you men care for nothing but beauty."

"And you ladies only discover all the qualities of mind and heart in a woman when she is not good-looking. When she is pretty you find she has plenty of faults—there is no further question about her good qualities."

"For shame! do be still—what makes you say all that?"

"Why, because all your intimate friends are as ugly as mortal sin."

"What, is it necessary, in order to please you, monsieur, that I must get ladies of rare beauty to visit me, that you may make love to them before my very eyes?"

"No, I don't ask for rare beauty — you prefer rare ugliness. By Jove, you must follow your taste. After all it is perfectly the same to me."

Ambroisine hardly restrained a movement of impatience, then she rang and her maid appeared.

"Adrienne, is the coffee ready?"

"Yes, madame."

"Serve it."

"And see that it is hot, scalding hot — above all," said Casimir. "Do you understand, mademoiselle — if it is cool enough for me to drink, I won't drink it."

Adrienne went off laughing; Ambroisine exclaimed,—

"I do not like any one to joke with the servants, it makes them familiar."

"Have I joked with yours?"

"Of course you did; you said something about the coffee."

"My dearest, one can't speak to a woman at all and please you, it seems. You see evil in everything — you don't think, I hope, that I am making eyes at your maid?"

"I don't say that — but you don't tell me that she is too ugly?"

"Come, you don't want to make me believe that she is pretty. A flat nose, red hair, she's a very suitable piece for some young fellow in the awkward squad!"

"She is a very good girl — she is exceedingly attached to me; when I am ill she does her very best to help me."

Adrienne brought the coffee; while she was placing the cups her mistress said to her,—

"Adrienne, I was quite ill yesterday, wasn't I?"

"Oh, yes, madame! I was quite in a way about you. Madame Florentine told me to go and get your draught made up — I ran as fast as possible

— but there was such a crowd at the pharmacist's and I had to wait so long — I really had to entreat them to hurry, saying, 'It is for my mistress, she is suffering greatly.' But those men are so used to working for sick people that they won't move a bit faster."

"My poor Adrienne — Wait, take that little morning cap that is on the sofa, I give it you."

"How good you are, madame."

"I like to recompense those who serve me zealously. You may go."

The maid took the little cap which her mistress had given her and departed skipping.

Casimir swallowed his coffee, took a little glass of the divine liqueur made by the Benedictines of Fécamp, and another of rum, saying,—

"Well, I think that is what might be called a breakfast."

"Will you dine with me?"

"Why, my dear, it is almost three o'clock, when one has breakfasted as I have done, one hardly dreams of dinner — I shall not be hungry."

"But you know you are to take me this evening to the Opéra-Comique."

"Yes, yes, that is understood."

"You are not going to do as you did yesterday?"

"Don't have the slightest fear of it. I'll go and get a breath of air and perhaps have a game of billiards at the café of the porte Saint-Martin theatre."

"Go, by all means, you bad boy, kiss me."

"I shall see you again, presently."

On leaving Madame Montémolly's, Casimir walked for some time on the boulevard; he experienced a desire to take the air, which is always good for the digestion, after a copious meal. The young man lit a cigar, according to the affected practice of saunterers.

Suddenly, in fumbling in one of his side pockets, he felt under his fingers something in shape like a rouleau. It was in fact one of those pretty morocco cases lined with brass, made expressly to put gold in. Our young man took the roll from his pocket, drew a little to one side, and counted the contents of the case; he found twenty-nine louis there. He shut the case again and replaced it in his pocket, saying to himself,—

"Five hundred francs! she slipped that into my overcoat, she said to herself, 'He can't have much money left'; she was not deceived, I had barely twenty francs remaining — but always to be taking money from that woman, it is humiliating, it is shameful; still, if she were at once to put four or five thousand francs in my pocket, at least I should have plenty for a long time without running short; but she takes care to give me only a similar sum, she wants always to keep me dependent upon her. And she does not want me to work, no, she is fearful lest I should be able to get along without her; yet she says that she loves me — yes,

"Go, by all means, you bad boy, kiss me."
"I shall see you again presently."

PHOTOGRAVURE FROM ORIGINAL DRAWING BY WILLIAM GLACKENS.

and she does — for her own sake, but not for mine. Unfortunately with women that way of loving is the most common. Ah, these are not like the Spartan women, who said to their husbands as they left for the wars, 'Return a victor, or remain among the slain.' You will say to me, perhaps, that this is a singular manner of loving men—to advise them to go and be slain. 'Ne quid nimis!' excess in everything is a defect. Let's go and have a game of billiards, this is about the time that Miflaud is usually at the café of the theatre. Devil take it, I remember today is the day for my lesson with Mademoiselle Proh — shall I go? I am hardly in a fit condition to give a good drawing lesson. Ambroisine made me drink all sorts of things. I must even exhale an odor of wine, of liqueurs; I can't present myself in this state to a respectable family — no, that would be unseemly. Oh, the delights of Cupid, these are your results. Ambroisine has done quite all that was necessary to deprive me of the taste for work. Never mind, so much the worse for her; I'll go and have a game at billiards."

When a person has once acquired the habit of thinking of nothing but amusement, it is very difficult to conquer it, and to have sufficient will-power to conquer any thought of pleasure and to set one's self resolutely to study or to work. This is what happened at this moment to Casimir; the young man was not devoid of good intentions; he had proved that in engaging to give drawing

lessons to his neighbor's daughter; he desired to earn money either by means of his talent or by means of a position under an administration; but his mistress was there to bar the way; she was rich, she wished to monopolize her lover, she wished him to live only for her and through her. When a woman who is still very seductive wants to subjugate a man, she employs all means to that end, and will do a great deal to please.

Casimir did not go to give a lesson to Mademoiselle Angélina Proh; he went to his favorite café, and found there young men who liked to loiter as he did himself; there were some of them who went much farther in this than did he; there were some to be seen there who came in as soon as the café was opened, placed themselves at a table and played dominos until it was time to think of dinner. And that meal over, they quickly returned to their game, and only finished it when the place closed. You were about to say that these were gamblers and not idlers; that is possible, but I call those idlers who pass their lives in a café.

After several hours consecrated to knocking billiard balls about, Casimir remembered that his mistress wanted to go and have some ices at the Neapolitan café before going to the play; so it was necessary that he should go and call for her rather before the time when the play would begin at the Opéra-Comique. He therefore proceeded to Madame Montémolly's, and found her very charm-

ingly dressed for the occasion, wearing her gown with that easy grace of which all women are not possessed; some holding themselves too straight, too stiff, and others going too far in a distinctly opposite direction.

"Have you dined, my dear?" asked the handsome dame.

"By Jove, no, I haven't even thought of it; I was not hungry."

"Well, neither was I. But do you know what we must do? After the play we will go and get our supper at the Café Anglais. Does that suit you?"

"Yes, perfectly; you always have excellent ideas."

Mademoiselle Adrienne had been to fetch a little victoria, which she had been quick to do, because she would be more free for the evening, when her mistress would be gone. Ambroisine and her lover were driven to the café so renowned for its ices and sherbets and other frozen delicacies, after which they repaired to the Opéra-Comique, where Madame Montémolly had hired a box in advance.

They were playing a new piece by Auber, that celebrated composer who gave the world so many great masterpieces, so many operas which people are never tired of hearing. "He will grow old," people used to say, but they were mistaken, one who has the power of composing such delightful melodies must always remain young; time stopped for Auber.

Casimir listened to the music. Ambroisine was busied in assuring herself that her lover was not looking at other women. But all passed off well, for the young man did not gaze at any particular part of the house for more than a moment at a time. The opera ended, the loving couple wended their way to the Café Anglais, which is not two steps from the Opéra-Comique. There they secured a private room and ordered a fine supper, to which they both did honor. I shall not tell you whether this pretty little supper was diversified by tender caresses and vows of love, I shall leave that to your discretion; of one thing I am certain—it was nearly two o'clock in the morning when Madame Monté-molly said,—

"I think it is time to go home. Ask the waiter to call a cab, my dear."

Cabs are never lacking in this rich and brilliant neighborhood, where they turn night into day; where at two o'clock in the morning the scene is often more animated and full of life than at noon. Casimir escorted Ambroisine to her abode; then he had himself driven home to the Rue Paradis-Poissonière, saying to himself,—

"By Jove, this day has been well employed; it has been complete."

The young man, also, as he said this was in a certain sense complete, for he had finished his day as he began it and had not spared the wine at supper any more than at breakfast; champagne frappée

had played a great part in his day's work; he was not tipsy, because a well-bred man does not get tipsy, but he was in that stage of inebriety which is between drunkenness and sobriety.

The cab stopped. Casimir was in front of the door, and pulled the brass button, which would ring the bell and awaken the porter.

"If only my estimable porter is not sleeping too soundly," he said to himself; "I hope he knows that I have not come in."

As he was ringing, Casimir perceived a mass of something lying in front of the entrance door; he stopped, the better to examine it, touched it gently with his foot — the mass moved; it was a man who was lying there.

Casimir stepped back, with the thought that it was perhaps a robber who was pretending to sleep, for he had not even a cane with which to defend himself; but the mass did not move again and he decided to pull the button a second time.

As they still failed to open the door, Casimir, grown impatient, pushed the individual who was lying there, and who was in his way, with his foot; a low growling was heard and a head which had the face turned towards the door was raised a little as the man muttered,—

"Well, what now? who's there?"

"What are you doing there, in the street?"

"Couldn't you see I was sleeping. Isn't a person even allowed to sleep quietly now?"

"People don't sleep in front of the door of a house."

"Pshaw! I belong in that house — it's my political domicile — up in the attics."

"If you lodge here why don't you go in and go to your room, instead of lying down there? You would be more comfortable in your bed."

"My bed! yes, it's very nice, is my bed; a straw mattress and bedbugs — that's the whole business."

"Well, people don't sleep in the streets; a patrol, some policemen might come along and take you to the station."

"I ask nothing better — I'm waiting for them; besides, it's that rascal's fault, that scamp of a Chausson wouldn't open the door for me."

"Ah, Chausson, the porter, wouldn't open for you?"

"Yes, my servant Chausson."

"The porter, you mean to say, don't you?"

"Call him porter, if you like; he was my servant and for a very long time too. Does that astonish you — to hear me say that? When I was his master I sometimes administered correction to him; he used to drink my liqueurs, Madame Amphoux' liqueurs — the real stuff, that my Dulcinea used to send me; and now, to revenge himself, my servant, become my porter, leaves me to sleep in the street."

"He'll have to open, that's all there is about it."

And Casimir pulled the bell with all his might without leaving hold of the bell pull.

The sound of the bell was succeeded by the porter's voice, shouting,—

"Rouflard, if you don't leave off pulling the bell, I'll send you away tomorrow."

"It's not Rouflard ringing, it is I; open immediately, porter, I order you to do so."

"Why, is it you, M. Casimir? I beg your pardon, I thought you came home a long time ago. Ah, if I had known it was you — you know very well I never make you wait."

The door opened, in fact, and Casimir went into the house, saying to the individual lying on the ground,—

"Well, here is the door open. Can't you go in now?"

The person whom the porter called Rouflard seemed unwilling to leave his horizontal position, he decided, however, to rise, or rather he rolled inside the door and supported himself against the wall. M. Chausson, the porter, had got up and put on a jacket which served him in place of a dressing-gown, and he came with a flat candlestick in his hand to shut the door and offer his young tenant a light with which to ascend the stairs.

Casimir was engaged in examining the man who had his back to the wall, against which he could hardly support himself, because he was so completely drunk.

"If you wish, monsieur, you may take this candle to light you to your room. I am very sorry to have made you wait, but I thought it was Rouflard ringing again, and that was why I didn't open the door."

"Look you, at this low beast who wants to leave his master in the street; I quite recognize my former lackey there."

"Hold your tongue, Rouflard; when people get into the state you are in they should come home before midnight, at least."

"If I choose to come home later, if it pleases me to do so, you are here to open the door for me; do you understand, my servant?"

"I'm no longer your servant, thank God! that time is gone by."

"When you used to drink my liqueurs."

"You didn't pay me my wages and I had to take something to sustain me; why you ate everything up yourself."

"Rouflard indeed! I forbid you to speak so familiarly to me, do you hear, fellow?"

"And I forbid you to call me your domestic. Go to bed, drunkard."

"Go to your kennel, dog! tomorrow, as soon as it's light, I'll tell you this, you'll have business with your master."

Having launched this threat, at which the porter shrugged his shoulders, M. Rouflard staggered along till he reached the stairs; there he supported

himself against the balustrade and began the ascent clinging firmly to it. Casimir had remained below to listen to the dialogue between the drunkard and the porter; he felt somewhat curious to know how this man, who was so ill-dressed and seemed so poverty-stricken, could have had M. Chausson for his servant; when Rouflard had disappeared up the staircase, he addressed the porter,—

"This drunkard asserts that you have been his servant, is he telling the truth, M. Chausson?"

"By jingo, yes, monsieur, I don't deny it; but you would find it hard to believe, as you look at the wretched man now; but twenty-five years ago, this same individual was a man of fashion, the prime favorite of all the women, who called him nothing but 'handsome Rouflard, the charming Rouflard!' And, to tell you the truth, he was then a very handsome fellow, well-built, well set-up, an amiable face and clever! Oh, the fine fellow knew how to use his eyes, to captivate the women, by jingo! he knew how to do it — it was his profession."

"His profession? What do you mean by that, porter?"

"Why, that is very easy to understand; I mean by that, that handsome Rouflard did nothing but court the ladies, and he addressed himself by preference to rich women. Then he received presents from this one, and presents from that one. When his tradespeople, his creditors came to bother him for money, it was never he who paid them. I knew

all about it, I was his valet de chambre, his factotum, his confidential man; he gave me his instructions; he would say to me,—

"'Chausson, you will send my tailor to Eléonore, my bootmaker to Ernestine, they will pay those gentlemen, I can't be so foolish as to pay my creditors, shame upon the thought! — it's very bad form to do such a thing. Oh, and you will go to Madame So-and-So, I won a hundred louis from her at ecarté yesterday, you will demand it from her and she will pay you — that's understood; besides, gambling debts are sacred, they should be paid within twenty-four hours. You will also go to the baroness and the little countess; we betted on the races; I won a thousand crowns from the one, a thousand francs from the other, you will receive all of that, I need these sums.'

"I used to go and do these errands, and for a long time these ladies paid — very willingly, without making the slightest remark. Then I would obtain something on account of my wages, and I would drink Madame Amphoux' liqueurs for the rest. Oh, the liqueurs of the Isles — they were my weakness!

"But little by little things began to go wrong; Rouflard, who drank like a trout, was soon aware that his nose was becoming as red as a beetroot— that did him a good deal of harm with his mistresses, for, as a rule, women do not like red noses nor what is called a drunkard's face. When my

master would send me to get the proceeds of a bet, or money lost at play, these ladies would sometimes say to me, 'Rouflard is mistaken, it was not I who lost, it was he'; or else, 'I am sorry, but my cash box is locked.' Some of them went so far as to tell me, 'You go and be hanged; I've had enough of that drunken Rouflard; I won't feed him any longer.' When I would go back and bring these answers to my master, he would get into a fury and want to flog me, and then would be obliged, in order to get money, to sell one after the other of the pretty presents or jewels which he had received from his sweethearts.

"When I saw that he had nothing more to sell, and that no one sent him any more liqueurs, I said to myself, 'It is time to leave this place.' He owed me six months' wages, but I had to give that up for a bad job. I left handsome Rouflard — who was no longer at all handsome, and whose dress was no longer that of an exquisite — full of business, trying to get another mistress well-off enough to keep him; and I found a good situation. I saved something, I married, and I obtained a place as porter in this house, where I have been for eight years; my wife died here, which does not prevent my being very happy.

"But imagine my surprise, monsieur, when, about nine months ago, I saw a man dressed like a beggar, dirty, unshaven, who asked me if I had not some little corner, a loft, or even a garret to let to him.

I could hardly believe my eyes, but there was in the expression of his face some remains of his former looks, and I exclaimed, 'God forgive me! but aren't you Rouflard?' 'That is my name,' answered he, 'yes, I am he who was formerly known as "handsome Rouflard," whom time and misfortune have somewhat deteriorated. But wait, let me look at you. Ah, I remember now — you are Chausson — you are my servant; well, lodge me and be my porter now. I have become very virtuous, I go to bed every evening at nine o'clock, and I drink water only — when I have no money to buy wine.'

"The sight of the poverty of this man, whom I had known as a brilliant, fashionable young fellow, troubled me, and I said to him, 'Well, so be it, I will give you a little closet under the roof; but what do you do now? what is your occupation?' He rubbed his forehead for awhile, then he answered me, 'I do anything anyone wishes — errands, cooking, I bottle wine, I clip dogs, I train parrots, but the occupation I like best is to pose for painters.' 'Well, I'll try to get you something to do, and I'll lodge you at the top of the house; but here you will be in a quiet house, and you must conduct yourself peaceably.' He promised, and God knows how he has kept his word. I got him some errands to do for a tenant, but as soon as he gets a few sous my drunkard goes and spends them for drink, and comes home at unheard of hours. I've warned him that it could not go on like this, and he promises

me to reform; that is, when he is sober, but you see how he reforms. He made such a disturbance at the door tonight that, but for you, I assure you, he would have spent the night in the street. Really he's as worthless a fellow as possible, is Rouflard!

"But a man who lives at the expense of women in his youth must necessarily come to that, because his breadwinner is his handsome face, but when his face turns to the color of a baked apple, good-by to his fair friends! He must sharpen his teeth at his own expense."

Casimir made no reply, handsome Rouflard's story had quite sobered him, and he went up the staircase looking quite pensive.

CHAPTER V

The Proh Family

The Proh family was assembled in the drawing-room. Madame Celeste Proh you already know, for her portrait has been very fully drawn for you; this lady's husband, M. Castor Proh, was a former professor of history and of dead languages. He was a big dry man with a yellow complexion, who had been very ugly in his youth, and who had not improved in his looks as he grew older; he had a nose so flat, so buried in his face, that it would have been impossible for him to wear spectacles. This gentleman wore habitually the expression of a schoolmaster who was going to scold his pupils; he spoke constantly in a gruff, disagreeable tone, his wife asserted that she had never seen him laugh; but this does not by any means indicate a lack of humor, there are some persons who chuckle inwardly, and do not show their amusement outwardly. M. Proh did not show his.

An unexpected inheritance had given the professor an opportunity to retire and live upon his income; he no longer had any further desire, he said, than to occupy himself with the education of his children, but his daughter preferred pleasing

accomplishments to the study of history, and little Alphonse put out his tongue at his sire when the latter spoke to him of the dead languages. He was a real enfant terrible, greedy, curious, idle, noisy, saucy; his father asserted that he was a promising child.

Mademoiselle Angélina Proh was approaching her sixteenth year; at this age, unless she be warped in body, a humpback, or has a flat nose and squinting eyes, a young girl is always good-looking, even though sometimes it is only the beauty of youth and innocence, and that makes conquests — there are some men who are only taken by that kind of beauty. Mademoiselle Proh had no other; she added to it an amount of stupidity which might be mistaken for ingenuousness, but which would leave no doubt of its quality later on.

At this moment, Madame Proh was embroidering a collarette, Mademoiselle Angélina was trying to draw eyes and ears; little Phonphonse was cutting out a picture, and the former professor was walking up and down the room, holding his chin and looking as though he were lost in meditation. Suddenly he stopped.

"Look here, Alphonse, I'm going to put a very simple question to you."

"What about are you going to question me?"

"Don't say that — what about are you going to! — In the first place, that is a very badly turned sentence."

"Very bad; why is it bad, papa?"

"My son, I am questioning you, but it is not for you to question me. Listen to me carefully, and answer me illico! What was the first man called?"

"Illico!"

"What? Look here, my boy, pay attention. I ask you what was the first man called?"

"Well, then, illico! you told me to answer illico, and I did say it, and you're not pleased!"

"Why, you little rascal, I meant immediately, at once — that is what illico means."

"Monsieur, this child is right, why should you use these barbarous words to him? which he doesn't understand; you confuse his memory, and that is all!"

"Madame, occupy yourself with your finery, your dress, and leave me to direct the education of my son; he has talent, he is promising, but he needs to be often instructed."

"Thank God, he has plenty of time before him!"

"One can never have enough of it, madame, for instruction. I flatter myself I have been well-informed for some time, and I need a hundred years more of existence for my education to be complete — full."

"Like an omnibus."

"Phonphonse! 'tu castigaberis'!"

"Papa, you know well that in the omnibus the

conductor always says 'full.' Oh, draw me a big farmer, my sister won't make me one."

"Your sister is working on her eyes and her ears, she is right. But that makes me think that yesterday was your drawing lesson. Did M. Casimir come?"

"Yes, papa."

"No, it is not true—my sister is telling a story, our neighbor didn't come yesterday to give us a lesson."

"Is your brother right, my dear?"

"Goodness, I don't know—I don't remember. You are going to make me spoil my ear!"

"I don't give this young man twenty-five francs a month for him to neglect you—Madame Proh, you ought to look out for that."

"Good gracious, monsieur, don't be uneasy about that! M. Casimir is incapable of wronging you of a lesson, he is a very distinguished young man, who only teaches the children drawing to oblige us."

"Madame, I mistrust those persons who only do things to oblige us; usually, they do them badly; they are like those servants who are always saying that they were not born to serve—they never perform their duties satisfactorily."

"Papa, make me a farmer."

"Let me see—have you paper, a pencil?"

"Here it is, but, oh, I wish you would make it with your feet."

"With my feet? Phonphonse, you talk at random, as if one draws with his feet when he has hands to use."

"But you, papa, ought to know how to use your hands as well as your feet, because you are a quadrumane."

"Quadrumane! I am a quadrumane? who has put that impertinence into your mouth? Do you know what a quadrumane is?"

"Yes, it is a mandrill. You know very well that the other day mamma said you were a mandrill. I asked M. Casimir what a mandrill was; he answered me that it was a man of the woods which was a quadrumane."

"You hear that, madame; your son compares me to a monkey because the other day you were not afraid to qualify me with that epithet."

"Why, monsieur, you called me a giraffe. Was that any more polite?"

"Papa Mandrill, make me a farmer?"

"The next time you call me mandrill, I'll give you such a whipping as you will remember. Come and study your grammar lesson."

"It tires me to learn grammar; I'd much rather cut out images."

"Do as I order you, rascal! and don't grumble. Angélina, when you have finished your ears, I should like you to mend my socks, which are in a very bad state; I already complained about them to your mother, who, I hope, has attended to what I said."

"Your socks, papa, why, the idea! I haven't touched them."

"What, madame, do you mean to say you haven't had my linen repaired? Why, really, I don't know what to think—or rather I know only too well, you occupy yourself only with your dress, your adornments, your gowns with tails or without tails, and my linen is in a pitiable state; my flannel vests have no buttons, my shirts are torn, my underdrawers are in holes; but, provided that you can have a fashionable gown, you don't trouble about the rest."

"Do you imagine it to be necessary that I should think of nothing but your underdrawers. Fie! that would make me quite melancholy."

"It makes me feel a good deal more melancholy, madame, to find my shirts torn when I want to put them on."

"Reassure yourself, monsieur, your linen will be repaired; but as there is too much work here, and my daughter and I cannot do it all, I have given it all to a workwoman."

"To a workwoman—but are you well informed as to the capability of this workwoman—some of them change the objects intrusted to them."

"Oh, you needn't think that she will change your socks; you are always so afraid of being robbed. Besides, it is a young girl who lives in the house, on the fifth floor; it is little Lise."

"Little Lise, I don't know her—and she sews well, this little Lise?"

"She sews like a fairy; I have already employed her, and I am very much pleased with her; the more so as she does not charge much — one may pay her just what one likes."

"Oh, then, you must employ her often, and this young girl lives alone at the top of the house?"

"No, she is with her grandmother, a good old woman, who is almost a paralytic, and who is now unfitted for any sort of work; well, this little Lise takes care of her and works day and night, that the poor old creature may lack nothing. Oh, this young girl conducts herself very well. Everybody in the house praises her."

"Hum! I always mistrust people whom everybody praises — that often hides the deepest intrigue — this little girl no doubt has lovers."

"Oh, monsieur, what an idea — how can you say such things before your daughter?"

"My daughter is learning to draw, and when a young lady wants to draw from casts, and copy the antique models, I think she can understand what a lover is. So long as your little Lise is virtuous and has none, I ask nothing better."

"Yes, yes, Lise has a lover," shouted young Phonphonse; "I know him well, I do; I know him — "

"What do you say, my son, where have you learned such things?"

"Why, I heard it. Isn't it true, sister, that the little working girl on the fifth floor has a lover."

"Let me alone, you'll make me spoil my ear."

"Daughter," said mamma in her turn, "it is I who question you; leave your ears for a moment, and answer me. Do you know that little Lise has a lover?"

"If you believe all the foolish things my brother says you will have enough to do."

"It's you that's a stupid, sister; you heard the drunkard who lives in the attic say on the staircase, 'Give me Lise, she is my sweetheart'—and then he said, 'She's my mistress, my fancy'—And you said, 'Well, I must say Lise has a nice lover.'"

"That isn't true! I didn't say that."

"Yes, you did say it."

"No, no, no!"

"Yes, yes, yes!"

"Enough, enough! satis! satis!" shouted M. Castor Proh in his turn; "these children remind me of Cain and Abel. I had not the pleasure of their acquaintance, but their quarrels had a very terrible ending."

"Now we know the drunkard is mixed up in this," said Celeste, "it is easily seen, monsieur, where our son hears all the odd things he says."

"Yes, madame, this drunkard, this Rouflard, for his name is Rouflard, I think, is a bad scamp, idle, drunken, who ought to be driven away from the house. The porter Chausson recommended him to me, begging me to give him work, and told me he was a man who had been well brought up,

but had had misfortunes. I consented to employ him, although I always mistrust those people who have misfortunes. I needed some Jamaica rum; you don't like it, madame, you prefer anisette; but I like rum. It was one day when you were dining in town with the children. I gave this Rouflard some money and ordered him to go to the 'Americains,' for that is where they keep the best. My messenger left towards four o'clock in the afternoon, and it should have taken him an hour, more or less, to do his errand — at six o'clock he had not come back. I went to inform the porter — I feared something out of the way had happened to his protégé. Seven o'clock, eight o'clock struck — in fact, at ten o'clock I saw my man come in tipsy, drunk, hardly able to stand on his legs; he offered me a bottle three parts empty and said to me, with a bantering expression, 'Here's your stuff, it has leaked a little on the way — it was ill-corked, apparently.' 'What!' said I, 'you dare to assert that this bottle leaked; why, it must have been perfectly sealed — how dare you take the cork out? That was to drink my rum, you are a wretch, a rascal.' Instead of excusing himself, of begging my pardon, this Rouflard insulted me by saying, 'If you are not satisfied, I'll drink the rest.' In fact, I left him the remainder; but I complimented the porter on his friend, and, I repeat, such a drunkard should not be allowed to remain in this house."

"Oh, well, Rouflard isn't afraid of you, Papa

Mandrill — no, no, not mandrill, not mandrill, Papa Castor."

"Do you mean to say you talk with this man, Phonphonse? I forbid you to speak to him, his habitual company would spoil you."

"I don't talk to him — he always says stupid things to me when he passes."

"Don't answer him, shut yourself into your fortress of silence."

"In my fort — I haven't got one; buy me one, papa, with little wooden soldiers."

"My boy, you did not get my meaning. I repeat to you, do not listen to what this drunkard says to you."

"Why, he's funny, he makes me laugh — he said to me yesterday morning, 'Why doesn't your father put his name on his door, that makes work for the artists.'"

"What, Phonphonse, do you allow this man to be so familiar; that's very unconventional on his part!"

"As if I could prevent him."

"Say to him, 'Monsieur, we have not kept turkeys together.'"

"Then he would say to me, 'You have kept them with your father.'"

"So this Rouflard wants me to put my name on the door."

"Yes, and he told me, 'Never mind, little low, I'll put it there with those of the v

family; people must know where to find the Proh family.'"

"Oh, he said that, a mere joke, I hope."

"Ah!" cried Angélina, "that makes me remember that yesterday I saw the man going up the stairs with a big lump of white chalk in his hand."

"Do you suppose he would dare to put ridiculous caricatures on my door?"

"Go, and look at it, M. Proh; with a drunkard one must expect everything. We have not been out as yet today; and he may have effectuated his threats of yesterday without our knowing it."

M. Proh left the drawing-room and went on to the landing, and almost directly he uttered an indignant exclamation, the whole family immediately ran out, curious to see what had been put on their door.

"Come, come, madame," cried M. Castor, "come, all of you, and see what this Rouflard has had the audacity to write on our door. It's there for every one to see."

In fact on the door, Rouflard had written with white chalk in big letters,—

Madame Pro-fanée
Mademoiselle Pro Nobis
Monsieur Pro-fesse
Le petit Pro-pice

CHAPTER VI

Little Lise. They Become Acquainted

After his well-employed day, Casimir had not passed a very agreeable night; he had slept very little; for the story of the individual who had slept in the street and who called the porter his servant returned to him incessantly in his thought — and awakened reflections which were by no means rose-colored; and without putting himself on the same level as Rouflard, he said to himself that a man who is willing to be supported by a woman is altogether despicable.

The result of these reflections was a well-fixed resolution from this time forth to set to work, and as painting was the only talent he possessed which he could utilize, he promised himself that he would resume his pencils and paint-brushes, and try by hard work to acquire what he lacked, that he might boldly begin painting from nature; what was more, he resolved to say nothing to Ambroisine of his new intentions, but to pursue them industriously in the privacy of his apartments.

One thing that is indispensable to a painter of portraits is a model. Casimir knew well that Madame Proh asked nothing better than to serve

him; but before painting this lady's portrait, the young man wanted to practise on another model. He remembered what the porter had said to him about Rouflard, and after drinking the cup of coffee that M. Chausson brought him every morning, Casimir mounted his staircase to go to Rouflard.

The house was high. When he reached the fifth floor, where there were only the rooms occupied by the maids of the house, Casimir stopped to take breath, then he looked around him, the staircase ended there; however, the porter had told him that his old master lodged in the garret on the sixth floor, but he could not perceive the slightest trace of a staircase.

However, he could hear a voice, the sweet young voice of a woman; she was singing as if she were rocking a child. The key was on the outside of this door and Casimir decided to half open it to ask how he could get to the sixth floor.

He saw a room very modestly furnished — one might say poorly furnished; at the back was a comfortable enough bed with heavy curtains of serge; and near it was a little couch without curtains which was composed only of a palliasse and a very thin mattress, then there was a walnut-wood commode, a table, chairs, a small mirror on the mantelpiece, all of which were indispensable; there was nothing but what was strictly necessary, only it was all carefully kept with a neatness and order which hid a part of its poverty.

An old woman was lying in the bed; but near the table a young girl was seated at needlework. Casimir was struck with astonishment at the sight of this young person, whose dress was quite simple, quite modest, but whose face pleased immediately by the sweet and gracious expression of its beautiful eyes, by the charm of its smile, in fact it inspired one with that feeling, so difficult to analyse, which one experiences at the sight of an unknown person, whom one is to know very intimately when once chance has brought about a meeting.

"Pardon, mademoiselle," said Casimir, standing by the door he had opened. "I am indiscreet. I disturb you perhaps. But although I have been living in the house for several months, I know very little about it. I am looking for an individual who lodges on the sixth floor, but I can't find this sixth floor, so I had to ask how I could get there."

The young girl smiled as she answered,—

"Indeed, monsieur, when one does not know the landing well, it is difficult to perceive the staircase which leads to the next floor—but wait, down there at the back there is an angle in the wall, and behind this angle you perceive a staircase, or rather a kind of very narrow ladder which leads to the sixth floor, if you were very stout you would not be able to pass up it, it is so very narrow."

"Probably the proprietor doesn't want the tenants on the sixth floor to go up and down his house too often," said Casimir, laughing.

"Oh, there is only one tenant, a man who is very uncomfortable up there."

"As he is always tipsy, it seems, he can imagine that his garret is a palace."

"Do you think so, monsieur? Poor Rouflard! But he is not always tipsy; happily he is rather more cheerful when he is sober than when he has been drinking. Ah, excuse me, monsieur, my grandmother has turned in her bed. I think she wants something — excuse me."

The young girl bowed, and Casimir understood that he ought to go. He thanked the pretty girl again and closed the door.

"What," he said, "I had so charming a neighbor and did not even suspect it. In Paris one may lodge for years in the same house and not know the ladies who live on one's staircase, for one never meets them. This young girl is really ravishing, her features are both gentle and refined, her eyes beautiful, her hair black as ebony, her mouth amiable. What a delightful model she would make! She lives with her grandmother, and they do not seem to be very well off; I must find out about them. But let me see, I must find the stairs which lead to M. Rouflard's. Ah, here it is, and narrow indeed, it's a regular trap ladder, a crinoline could never get up there."

Casimir climbed the stairway, which had no banister, but was sustained on either side by the woodwork, and came to a kind of landing-place which

had three doors; two of them were wide open, the middle one was closed, but simply by a latch. It was necessarily there that the gentleman who had lain down in the street the evening before must lodge.

Casimir lifted the latch, the door opened, and he paused on the threshold, quite surprised at the picture which was presented to his sight; but this time his physiognomy did not express delight.

In a garret twelve feet square, and which was lit by a skylight in the roof, a man was extended on a heap of straw which supported a kind of mattress made of shavings; a cotton counterpane, black with dirt and full of holes, was all that covered him; not a vestige was there of a sheet; a round log of wood served as a bolster, which, to make it softer for his head, was covered with old playbills that probably had been torn from the lamp posts appropriated to the theatres. The one who was lying there must have been unable ever to completely undress himself, but as it was summer he had for the moment taken off his coat and waistcoat. On his head was an old tin saucepan without a handle which served him as a nightcap.

A rickety chair stood near this pallet and garments were strewn here and there about the hovel. On a shelf attached to the wall were several pots of pomade, a comb, a chop, a bottle, a pipe, and a small scrap of looking-glass.

When the young man had opened the door of

this retreat the person on the bed was asleep, with his face towards the wall, and Casimir's arrival did not awaken him; so the latter could examine the place where he found himself quite at his leisure. For a genre painter, the scene would have formed an original and striking theme for a picture.

But, after passing all this in a review which was necessarily short, Casimir decided to raise his voice to awaken the sleeper.

"Hallo, monsieur! neighbor, may I have two words with you?"

Rouflard half-turned, muttering,—

"Who's there? What do you want of me? I don't know what you mean! disturbing me like this — one can't even sleep quietly in this hovel."

"Excuse me, M. Rouflard, for having awakened you — but it is past ten o'clock, and I thought at this hour I should find you up."

"I get up late, I prefer to; and then I have nothing better to do than sleep. But if you will pay for a breakfast that is different."

"Perhaps, neighbor, if I can't offer you a breakfast, I can give you the wherewithal to buy a very satisfactory one."

At these words Rouflard turned round altogether, sat up in bed, took off the saucepan which served him as a nightcap, rubbed his eyes, and exclaimed,—

"Why, that's another thing altogether, those words appeal to me; why, I think I recognize you,

young man — you are M. Casimir Dernold and you live in this house, on the third floor."

"Precisely! so you know my name?"

"It was my servant who gave me these details — Chausson, our porter, who was formerly my knave, and who wanted to leave me to sleep in the street yesterday evening; for, now I remember, had it not been for you, honorable neighbor, the entrance porch would have been my bedchamber — that vagabond Chausson!"

"Allow me to say, M. Rouflard, that was not yesterday that all that happened, for it was more than two o'clock this morning when I came in."

"Oh, well, supposing it had been four? men of distinction, men of the world can't go to bed with the fowls. It is true I can no longer go to sup at the Maison d'Or, but I can always walk on the Boulevard des Italiens as much as I please! and Chausson is a snob — but he's revenging himself for some cuffs administered to him in days of yore. Ah, that is the way with men; to find out their vices you must give them riches. I think it was La Rochefoucauld who said that, or something equivalent to it."

"M. Rouflard, you are educated, how does it happen that you have not found suitable occupation?"

"Occupation! occupation for me. Ah, he's charming, is this neighbor of mine, why, it is precisely because I never would occupy myself that

I'm sleeping on this straw bed today. But we won't recriminate! You spoke of giving me the means of breakfasting, and your offer comes just in the nick of time, for I have not a sou; while, on the other hand, I am decidedly hungry; and, last but not least, I have no credit anywhere."

"But if you refuse occupation, perhaps you won't listen to my proposal."

"Certainly I will, if it isn't too fatiguing."

"Oh, not at all, it's merely to serve as a model; to come to my place and pose for four or five hours."

"To pose for the head?"

"Certainly, I only want your bust, your head and hands."

"Bravo! that suits me — suits me well. Posing is my element; formerly I made others pose, and vice-versa. When do you wish to begin?"

"Today — this morning, if you can?"

"Of course I can — only —"

"Only, it is necessary that you should breakfast, I understand that. Wait! here are ten francs in advance for your posing; go and breakfast, then come back to me, I will go and get my palette ready."

Rouflard rose lightly, he received the ten francs with a radiant face, and immediately put on his coat and waistcoat, saying,—

"It's a long time since I've had such a pleasant awakening. I must put on a little heliotrope pomatum to do honor to my painter."

"Oh, don't go to any expenses of the toilet for me, I find you well enough as you are."

"You are exceedingly kind. Ah, if you had only known me formerly, in my halcyon days, when the women were all disputing for my portrait and my person; but other times, other cares!"

"Pardon another question, M. Rouflard, which you may perhaps think rather indiscreet from a stranger."

"I will cheerfully answer it; don't stand on ceremony with me."

"You said just now that you had not a sou, and that you could get credit nowhere. If I had not visited you this morning, how would you have managed about breakfast?"

"How should I have managed? oh, yes, I can very easily understand that that question seems quite difficult of solution to you; are you not aware of the fact that there is an angel in the house?"

"An angel?"

"Yes, monsieur."

"In this house?"

"Yes, and on this very staircase, I am not speaking of the ladder which leads to this garret, but below on the fifth floor, in a very modest chamber, which looks like a palace, however, beside this, lives a young girl, about eighteen years old, I think, and an old woman whom she calls her grandmother. The young girl is named Lise — little

Lise; that is what every one calls her; she is very small, it is true, but so well-made, so graceful, and such a face! so very pretty! Why, I've seen beauties of all complexions in my young days, and women who were in fashion too, who saw at their feet the most desirable men in the swim — well, I tell you frankly this little Lise is worth all of them put together."

"I saw that young girl just now, I asked her the way to your staircase — she seemed to me very pleasing indeed."

"Pleasing! that hardly expresses it — she is more than pleasing; and such a good heart, so eager to oblige — when I am in my direst straits, as I told you just now, it is she who comes to my help. One day I had paused before her door which was half open, I was very hungry and I ventured to say to her, 'Neighbor, you don't happen to have a crust of bread you could give me, do you?' 'Are you hungry, monsieur?' she said, and immediately ran to her closet to look for some bread for me, which she gave to me with a small piece of cheese also, saying, 'There, that is the best I can do, as for wine, I haven't any.' 'Oh, this is quite enough,' said I, 'and you are a thousand times too good.' She added, 'When you lack bread come and ask me for some, you won't put me out at all, we need so little for my grandmother and I that I always have some left.' This, monsieur, is the reason I called this young girl an angel,

you see I had reason to do so. I try not to abuse her kindness — but, sometimes, too often I am afraid, I am obliged to have recourse to her. What can you expect, for it seems to be my destiny to live at the expense of women ; so I call little Lise my sweetheart. But in all kindness, all honor, I respect that young girl as much as I love her. I do better, I listen to her advice. She scolds me sometimes when I come in tipsy."

"But you don't follow her advice."

"No, that is true, for I got tipsy again yesterday, but what can you expect? it is the force of habit. But there is no danger of my stopping when I am tipsy to talk to Lise — poor little thing! so kind to me, her kindness to me is more meritorious from the fact that she works without relaxation to support her paralyzed grandmother — sometimes at midnight, one o'clock in the morning, I hear her working still, and I shout to her, 'Neighbor, you sit up too late, take a little rest,— you will make yourself ill with working so hard'; she will answer cheerfully, 'No, no, it is a pleasure to me to sew, besides I haven't the slightest desire to sleep.' It is really strange that a little bit of a woman like that should have more courage to work than five or six jolly fellows like myself."

Casimir listened attentively to all that Rouflard said of little Lise; that gave him something more to reflect upon. But Rouflard, who had dressed himself, rattling the ten francs in his hand, said,—

"Pardon, my dear neighbor, but hunger bids me go. I don't want to turn you out of the room, you are free to remain in this garret if it amuses you, but I ask your permission to go and refresh myself."

And without awaiting the young man's answer, Rouflard went out and darted down his staircase, hardly listening to Casimir, who shouted to him,—

"In an hour, at my place — don't forget!"

Casimir went down the stairs, or rather the ladder, after the tenant of the garret; he went slowly, took his time, not because he was afraid of stumbling, but because he was thinking of what Rouflard had told him about the little girl who lived on the fifth floor, who sat up at night to work that she might support her grandmother and yet found a way to help those who had no bread.

Arrived on the landing of the fifth floor, the young man stopped before Mademoiselle Lise's door; he would have liked it had the door been open, but it was not, although the key was still in the lock, which indicated that she did not mind being disturbed. Casimir was dying with the desire to see this young girl again, whom he had heard so highly praised; he said to himself that he had not sufficiently thanked her for the information which she had given him and he again said, that between neighbors one need not stand on ceremony too strictly, and besides this little Lise worked very hard for her money with her needle, and if he

could get some work for her that would bring her in a little more money, he should be rendering her a service. In fact he gave himself a host of reasons why he should be right in opening the door — and so he opened it.

Little Lise was working, but she was not singing now; her pretty face was sad, she would look towards the bed in which the old woman was lying, and then she would sigh deeply. When he saw Casimir enter her room again, an expression of surprise stole over her features, but just as he began to speak to her, she put a finger on her mouth and said to him in a low voice,—

"Speak quite low if you please, for my grandmother is asleep, and we must not awaken her; she was very ill last night."

"By Jove, mademoiselle, I am very intrusive to thus come a second time to disturb you, but — I don't know whether I told you I was your neighbor."

"Yes, monsieur, you told me so; besides, I knew it. I have seen you sometimes in the house."

"You have seen me, and I did not see you? why, where were my eyes!"

"Oh, monsieur, I was in the porter's lodge; besides, I take up so little room you could easily fail to see me."

"But having seen you once, mademoiselle, it is impossible not to desire to see you again."

Little Lise did not answer this, but she looked

towards the bed; Casimir understood that the moment was ill-chosen for compliments, and besides it was not to pay her court that he wished to make his little neighbor's acquaintance, but with the desire of being useful to her; but was this really his only aim? That question I cannot answer; but the fact that he had resolved to be very circumspect in his behavior was certainly in his favor. So he went on, speaking in quite a low tone, and seating himself on a chair which was near him,—

"Forgive me, mademoiselle, if as a neighbor, I venture to speak frankly to you, I hope that you will see nothing in my words to offend. I learned, through the person who lodges above you, how hard you work that your grandmamma may lack nothing — but a woman's work is so often ill-paid that I should esteem myself fortunate if I could offer you the means of earning more with a great deal less trouble and fatigue, as I can if you are agreeable."

"In what way could I do so," asked Lise, "I only know how to sew and embroider, make scallops and darn."

"I will explain, mademoiselle. I am a painter, and have painted some little genre pictures, but one can earn more money at painting portraits; I am, however, not very proficient in that, I need to study, to work — I require to paint from nature and for that I must have models. I have noticed that Rou-

flard has a characteristic head; I have been to see him this morning, and have proposed to him that he should come and pose for me, he accepted my offer and I can employ him for a long time to come. But you, my young neighbor, have a charming head —forgive me the compliment, it was as an artist that I addressed it to you. I should be very happy if I could render your refined and gentle features on canvas. Oh, I am certain that I should be successful, one works so well when one has before his eyes a model who delights him. I shall not ask you to pose except when you have nothing pressing to do. I will take your hour, your time, and I shall believe myself unable ever to pay you enough for the time you spend in sitting for me—this is why I ventured to open your door again, and to present myself to you for the second time. If my proposition displeases you, I hope, mademoiselle, you will not imagine that I had the slightest evil intention."

Little Lise had listened with great attention to Casimir, and now she answered immediately,—

"No, monsieur, I shall not take your proposition in bad part. You have learned through M. Rouflard that I work for a living — to make enough that my grandmother may lack for nothing — and you wished to be useful to me. I cannot thank you enough for the interest you wish to take in me, but I cannot accept your proposition; posing for painters is not my trade, monsieur, and I have heard it said, by my neighbor above, that those

women who consent to serve as models are not very well thought of in the world. I am a poor girl without support, without family. I have nothing for my whole fortune but my reputation, and I must insist on keeping that — I am right, am I not, monsieur?"

These words, so simply said and yet so right, made a vivid impression on Casimir, who was not in the habit of hearing a woman talk reasonably to him. However, he tried to convince Lise.

"Mademoiselle, I confess that the model's occupation does give a woman a far from perfect reputation for virtue, although in all trades one can be well-conducted if one has but a strong will. But I was not intending to ask you to renounce your habitual occupations for this new career. I was asking you to pose for me only, to permit me to trace your features on canvas; it was a favor I asked and it would afford you a slight distraction from your work — come and pose for me whenever it seems convenient to you, or, if you like, I will come and paint here. I should bring my canvas and my palette and in this way you would not have to leave the invalid. Models are paid a good price — excuse me for mingling the question of money in all this; but in life one is obliged to return to it. If I employ you for a dozen sittings I shall be very happy if you will be content to receive fifty francs."

"Oh, good heavens, so much as that for merely letting you draw my face?"

"Yes, mademoiselle, and the prettier the model is, the more money she gets, that speaks for itself. As for finding one like you — in the first place it would be very difficult — and then I should have to pay a much higher price — and my means do not allow me to go to so much expense. You see, mademoiselle, that in acceding to my request it is I who will be under an obligation, and I shall, moreover, owe you many thanks; but if it displeases you, think no more of it."

Little Lise hesitated for some time before she answered; finally she muttered,—

"I regret that I cannot be of service to you; it seems to me, however, that you can easily find a face which is worth a great deal more than mine. Why, monsieur, I don't know much of the world, but I think that heaven has given me the gift of being able to read the thoughts of others. You wish to be useful to me and you try to persuade me that I shall be conferring a benefit upon you, ah, it is very generous on your part — confess, have I not divined rightly?"

Casimir was quite surprised at the perspicacity of the young girl. He could not help smiling as he stammered,—

"I confess you astonish me, mademoiselle, your language indicates an education above that which one ordinarily receives who is in the precarious position in which I see you; you have no relatives but this poor invalid, you say, but the ones you have

lost no doubt occupied a more fortunate position; but pardon me, I am too curious, perhaps?"

"Oh, monsieur, I have no reason to surround myself with mystery. My parents I never knew, they abandoned me early to a nurse's care, and later on they forgot me altogether."

"How could they do so, poor little thing! But this old woman here?"

"I call her grandmother, but she is nothing of the kind; she is only my nurse's mother. The latter was named Catherine Mauger; she loved me well and dreaded the time when she would be obliged to separate from me and restore me to my family; she was, therefore, very pleased when they sent her a large sum, saying, 'Leave your village, keep the child, and instead of the name she bears call her "Lise" and nothing else; but go and settle yourself in Paris at the following address. Set yourself up in a small business, and we will be careful to indemnify you for what the little one costs you.' My nurse had just lost her husband, and went to Paris, taking her mother with her, who is there in that bed. For some time they sent her money through the post for me, but all of a sudden these remittances stopped and they heard nothing more."

"But your nurse, no doubt, knew the name of the woman who wrote these letters to her?"

"No, the letters were not signed; she did not even know my mother's name."

"It is quite a romance."

"My good nurse troubled very little about it, she had undertaken a small milk business which paid her very well. When I was six years old she sent me to school; then, a little later on, as a day boarder, for she would never be separated from me for more than half a day. Dear nurse! she loved me — more than a mother, since mine had abandoned me. We lived thus very happily for some years; but four years ago good Catherine fell ill, and, despite all my care, she died. I was barely fourteen years old, but my nurse begged me to take care of her old mother, for she understood me and knew that I was courageous and had the will to work hard in recognition of all they had done for me. In the early time of our bereavement we had to live on the proceeds of the sale of the establishment kept by my nurse. I looked for work, but they thought me too young to entrust me with it, and when my kind grandmother sought it they thought her too old. At length, Providence helped us and I was able to earn our living. But a year ago my poor companion became partially paralyzed — so you see, monsieur, that I am right to work without relaxation and to watch unceasingly over her, for she has no one to care for her but me."

"What you have just told me, mademoiselle, has but increased the interest with which you inspire me — and forgive me if I again revert to the desire I experience to be useful to you. Poor

little one, abandoned by your parents, who are perhaps living in ease and enjoying all the pleasures that wealth can procure, while you — "

"Oh, monsieur, I assure you I never think of that; I only regret the loss of my nurse, my only mother, who loved me so dearly. I bear no grudge against my parents for leaving me with her, for I am sure they could not have cared for me better."

"Allow me to congratulate you on your philosophy; others, in your place, would be imagining all sorts of things."

"But not I, I think of nothing but my work."

"And would you still refuse to lend me your pretty face if I should propose to come here to paint your portrait."

"Certainly in that way it would be much more conventional — but, all the same — no, I do not wish to pose."

Casimir sighed as he rose, saying,—

"Come, I see very well that nothing will conquer your repugnance. I must not insist further; but should you by any chance change your opinion I shall be always quite ready with my canvas and brushes, and you will but have to say the word to see me hasten to you."

"I thank you, monsieur.

"Besides, if you will allow it, I shall call to inform myself as to the health of your aged invalid; you are quite willing I should do so, are you not, mademoiselle?"

Little Lise blushed, she hesitated, but this request was made to her in a tone so insinuating, this young man evinced so much interest in her, and his manner was so respectful and so polite — and then he was not entirely unknown to her, he lived in the house and the porter always spoke well of him ; all this induced the young girl to pronounce a "Yes, monsieur," that filled the one who heard it with joy. Then Casimir thanked his neighbor again for the permission she had accorded him, and he took leave of her and departed on tiptoe, without making any noise, so carefully that the invalid was not awakened.

Casimir returned to his room filled with an ardor for work ; he got his canvases ready and prepared his palette. Good examples have a great deal more effect than good counsels. There is this difference between practice and theory : one often listens with indifference and sometimes forgets what he has heard ; but one remembers what he has seen. The proverb is right which says, "An eye is worth more than ten ears."

The young painter impatiently awaited M. Rouflard's arrival, that he might get to work ; but time passed and the model did not come. Casimir began to think that he had been very wrong to pay the tenant of the garret in advance, for he was quite capable of spending it all without thinking of keeping his promise.

But presently a great noise of voices was heard,

they were shouting and disputing on the landing, and Rouflard's voice often dominated the others. Casimir wanted to know what was going on, he ran to open his door, and saw the Proh family on the landing, disputing with his future model.

The Proh couple appeared very much wrought up; Rouflard was but a trifle tipsy.

"Yes, monsieur," cried the big thin man, who, in fact, bore a slight resemblance to a mandrill — "I have the right to have you brought into the police court for what you have written on my door."

"You make me laugh with your police court; have me taken there then, that would amuse me greatly."

"Or at least before a justice of the peace," said Celeste Proh, "for you have insulted me in calling me Madame Profanée![1]"

"Insulted? devil take it! you are hard to please; I compared you to a flower. When a flower is no longer fresh we say it is faded; and I put you down as a faded rose; and that makes you angry! I might have put Madame Problème, Madame Profile, is in a bad way."

"Hold your tongue, insolent wretch! neighbor, you may judge of it; you, no doubt, have read what this man wrote on our door in chalk?"

"By Jove, no, madame, I didn't notice it."

The little boy began to shout,—

[1] Fanée: faded, wilted.

FANNE
FESSE

"Monsieur, I will have satisfaction for all your insults."

Photogravure from Original Drawing by William Glackens.

"He put there Mademoiselle Pronobis, Madame Profanée."

"Hold your tongue, Alphonse, it is needless to repeat these ugly things, since monsieur has not read them."

"M. Profesee, I am little Propice.

"Come, silence, Phonphonse, go into the house."

"No, I won't go in, I won't."

"And why did you put M. Profesee?[1] What do you mean to intimate by that expression?"

"What do I mean to intimate? Ha! ha! that's good, that is! By Jove, that is not difficult of comprehension, but perhaps you are no longer able to comprehend."

"Monsieur, I will have satisfaction for all your insults."

"You want me to give you satisfaction? I ask nothing better; a duel! that suits me exactly, I'll send my servant to you presently and you will settle the terms of the combat with him. I will accept any weapon you like, they are all alike to me, I can fight with anything you like; the sword, however, is the weapon for men of distinction."

"What's that? a duel!—this man dares to propose a duel to me? What impudence! to dare to think that I would go and measure myself against him."

"You measure yourself against me, my dear fellow! Oh, not with a yardstick! you are a great

[1] Roufiard here makes a vulgar and far-fetched pun on the word professeur.

beanpole, and I am but three and a half inches, you would have too great an advantage; but Chausson, my former lackey, will lend us two national guard sabres — or broom handles, just as you choose. Will that suit you, M. Prorata?"

"M. Casimir, I beg of you, tell this man to be silent, or I cannot answer for what will happen."

"None of your bluster, professor — or I'll punch your head."

"Come, Rouflard, you've breakfasted too well, that is easy to be seen — and this is not what you promised me; you forget that you were to pose for me and that I have been waiting for you."

"Ah, that is true — excuse me, my painter. I'll go with you. Why did these people bar my way?"

"M. Proh, and you, madame, I hope you will not take seriously the pleasantries which this man allows himself — he drinks sometimes to forget his poverty. We must be indulgent to the unfortunate — I promise you that it will not occur again."

"Ah, M. Casimir, it is quite on your account."

"Come, Rouflard, come and pose."

"I'll follow you, my Michael Angelo, my Raphael. Proh family, we shall see each other again."

Casimir made his model go into his rooms, and the Proh family also left the landing, after rubbing off all that remained of the chalk on their door.

CHAPTER VII

A Silver Spoon. More Maids

It was with no little trouble that Casimir managed to place his model as he wished, and, having got him into a desirable pose, it was harder still to make Monsieur Rouflard understand that he must not once move from the position taken. At length Rouflard calmed down; besides, Casimir allowed him to talk, and he availed himself of the permission freely. The old lovelace had become very loquacious as he grew older; he loved to speak of his past triumphs, and he interspersed his reminiscences with comments which were sometimes quite racy. Rouflard did not lack wit, for the man had everything necessary to make his way in the world, but he had lost rather than profited by his advantages.

Casimir listened for a time to his model's account of his successes with the ladies, but he presently led the conversation to a topic that was more interesting to the young painter. This was the young girl of the fifth floor, of whom it pleased him so greatly to hear anything.

"Monsieur Rouflard, have you been lodging in this house long?"

"It is very kind of you to say lodged, my Raphael; it might better be described as hiding, burrowing. Well, no matter! I've lived in the garret here for six months past, and I confess I have never felt inclined to sing,—

To live in a garret at twenty's sublime.

It's true I am no longer twenty, but, even if I were, I should never be of the poet Béranger's opinion. But the poets, provided the thought is original, proverbially care little for truth."

"And when you first began to live upstairs, were little Lise and her grandmother already established in the house?"

"Yes, but they had only been here a short time, according to what she has told me."

"And you even know, I suppose, when this young girl receives her visitors?"

"Visitors at Lise's! oh, dear, no, my little neighbor has never received, to my knowledge, a single person from outside. Once or twice only Madame Proh has been up with her small boy, and that was to give Lise work. The little imp kept whining, 'Oh, it's not nice here!' and as he wanted to tease the old grandmother, Lise put him outside the door. As to Madame Pro-tocol, she kept saying to the young girl, 'I can't pay you twelve sous for this, it's too dear — I don't want to give more than ten sous,' so often that at last Lise said to her 'Give me whatever you please, madame.' Poor little

thing! to bargain about two sous with one who works day and night to earn a living for her old grandmother! it was well worthy of Madame Profanée."

"Turn your head a little more to the left — very good; now, try and keep that position."

"Are you satisfied with me, monsieur?"

"Yes, you don't pose at all badly — that will do very well."

"Are you painting my portrait with any idea of sending it to the exhibition?"

"Why, perhaps; if it turns out well."

"In any case, you will tell me, won't you, monsieur, because I should like to go and see it myself."

"Yes, yes; but we haven't got to that yet. Do you know, Rouflard, whom I should be pleased to have for a model?"

"Confound it! I wager I can guess. You want to paint little Lise!"

"You are right. Yes, it would give me great pleasure to trace the charming features of that young girl."

"Well, what is to prevent you?"

"I have asked Mademoiselle Lise if she would consent to let me paint her portrait, and she has refused to allow me to do so."

"So she refused! I wager it is because she does not wish to leave her grandmother alone for long at a time."

"Why, as I understood that, I proposed to go

to her room with my canvas and palette, so that she might pose without leaving her poor invalid."

"Why, that was very nice of you, indeed; and she still refused?"

"Yes, she still refused. I am doubly sorry about it, because this little Lise works very hard to earn very little."

"I should think so, indeed; above all, if she works for that Proh. Ah! Lapereau — it's not bad, that isn't; I must remember that."

"Then, had she consented to pose, she would have earned a great deal more, and that without even leaving her customary work. It would have obtained them some little alleviations; she could have bought things for her invalid which, for want of money, she could not offer her otherwise. Am I not right, Rouflard?"

"You are right, a hundred, a thousand times; I can't understand why she should have refused you."

"This young girl is afraid of compromising herself, and she has heard tell that women who pose for painters have not a good reputation."

"They are not usually vestals! but is it necessary to make one's self uneasy about such things as those when one has to work for one's living. Lise carries her susceptibility too far? Never mind, my painter, you have none but the best intentions; you only wished to render a service to the little one, while making a pretty study for yourself, and

in going to paint her before her grandmother you would take away all pretext for gossip. I shall make my kind little neighbor understand that, and I am certain I shall succeed in deciding her to let you paint her face."

"Do you really think, Rouflard, that you can vanquish her resistance?"

"Why, certainly, I have vanquished a good many others. To triumph over women was my trade; although, to tell the truth, I employed some means with them that I shall not use with little Lise. But my power of persuasion remains with me, and the desire which I also experience of being useful to her who never refused me a morsel of bread — this will be, perhaps, the first time I have ever rendered a service to a woman — it will be a change for me."

As this was the first sitting, Casimir did not wish to fatigue his model too greatly, and at the end of two hours, noticing that Rouflard's limbs were getting uneasy, he said to him,—

"That is enough for today."

"Really, monsieur, you set me at liberty — well, that suits me, I was beginning to feel cramps in my calves, a defect of habit, look you; but it will pass off. Do you wish me to pose tomorrow?"

"Yes, of course; does that dismay you?"

"Not at all, on the contrary, I think I shall develop quite a taste for it. Earning money like this is not at all difficult. Oh, the little neighbor must

come also, the more so as it would put her in the way of giving a great pleasure to her grandmother; I am astonished that she has not thought of it."

"How is that? be more explicit, Rouflard; in what way can little Lise give pleasure to her poor paralytic?"

"You go straight to the point. In talking sometimes with me, for I am very fond of talking, above all with pretty girls, that is a remnant of my youth 'desenit in piscem.' Oh, I knew Latin, also; but being with women so much, I have forgotten it, for they do not like the dead languages."

"Come back to Lise, will you?"

"That's right, I should have made a good enough advocate, because I am careful about details, but this is how it was; my little neighbor sometimes said to me, when we were chatting, 'Ah, if I could only save, put a little aside, there is something that would give my grandmother a good deal of pleasure, and that I should like to offer her, but alas, I shall never be able to do it.' 'What is it?' said I, 'that your aged parent desires so greatly?' 'A silver spoon,' she answered, 'for she formerly had a very handsome one, during my nurse's life; but after her death, when we had been for a long time without my finding work, it was necessary to sell our possessions piece by piece, and the handsome spoon went with the rest. At present we can manage to live, but I can't lay up what would buy a silver spoon; and now that

the doctor orders doses, remedies, which are dear, I am still less able to do it — but health before everything; it is worth much more than a silver spoon.'"

"You are right, Rouflard; in posing for me, this young girl would soon have earned the means to buy what she wished for her grandmother."

"Unless the doctor should order some ruinously expensive elixir, then all the money will go in that way, for Lise doesn't hesitate when it is a question of solacing the poor invalid; but, all the same, I shall speak to her. Well, I'll see you tomorrow, — at the same hour?"

"A little sooner, at ten o'clock precisely."

"Any time you like. I am as free as a cockchafer. Oh, will you mind my just glancing at what you have done?"

"Not a bit; see here."

"Why that already begins to look like something. I'm not a painter, but I had the reputation of knowing a good picture when I saw it — and in my fortunate days I sometimes bought little genre pictures and I always made something out of them."

"Well, then, Rouflard, look at this little view taken at Bougival — that I have not yet quite finished."

"Let's see — oh, that's very pretty indeed, that's cheerful; there's life in that! Monsieur, you are a colorist, which many painters who have a good

deal of talent are not. What I say now is not for the sake of paying a meaningless compliment — you have a feeling for color. Take care of this little picture; why, formerly, I should have given three hundred francs for this and later on I should have made something by it."

"Come, since it seems good to you, I will finish this little landscape. I shall perhaps do better with genre pictures than with portraits; no matter, I shall try them both. Well, I'll see you tomorrow, Rouflard."

"Yes, monsieur, and I will not breakfast until after the sitting, in order to pose with more dignity."

The model was gone. Casimir left Rouflard's head and set to work at his landscape, he wrought with an ardor that surprised himself, but he grew to like his work, he carefully sought the defects in it, and ameliorated several of them. Time passes quickly when one is doing work that pleases; Casimir heard four o'clock strike and said to himself,—

"It is not possible it can be that time already? By Jove! and there's Ambroisine, I was to have taken her for a walk in the Bois at three o'clock, now I shall have another scene. Why have I allowed this woman to dispose of my time? Why? — because I was an idler, a coward, because I was afraid of the least little bit of work! and today I found an immense deal more pleasure in working at this picture than in walking in the Bois. Ah, when I think of this little Lise, who gives herself

not the smallest relaxation, who works constantly in her room, where her only company is a poor old paralytic woman, it makes me ashamed to think how inactively I have lived. I have, too, before my eyes Rouflard's situation — that man also has been feasted, petted by women; he has lived at their expense, and I see where that leads — his example shall not be lost on me. Madame Montémolly may get angry if she likes, but, hereafter, I shall work. I am quite decided as to that; in the mean time, as one must always be polite to ladies, I must go and seek her, for if I don't she will be quite capable of coming here to know what I am doing."

Casimir went to the fair Ambroisine's. This lady was in a very bad temper, because she had been dressed for more than an hour awaiting her lover who did not come. She walked impatiently about the rooms in her apartment; she looked every moment at the clock, called her maid, told her to go and ask the time somewhere, exclaiming,—

"I am sure this clock is fast, it must be wrong; go, Adrienne, and find out the correct time."

Adrienne went to inquire at the porter's and came back, saying,—

"Madame, you are not fast; in fact your time is six minutes slow."

"You are an idiot!" cried Ambroisine, tearing her gloves in her rage. "You looked at the clock the wrong way."

"Why, no, madame, since —"

"Enough! I don't wish it to be near five o'clock, it is impossible."

"Good heavens! if you wish it to be only midday it is all the same to me."

"Hold your tongue. I believe that you dare to joke — one word more and I'll discharge you!"

Adrienne departed, saying,—

"Her young man's been playing her tricks — you haven't got to the end of it yet, my darling."

At length Casimir arrived — he expected a scene, and had made up his mind what he should say; besides, he was resolved on persisting in his resolution to change his conduct.

"Ah, here you are, monsieur," said Ambroisine, biting her lips with vexation. "Do you know what time it is?"

"Yes, madame; it is twenty minutes to five."

"And at what time were you to call for me?"

"Rather earlier than this, it is true; but by Jove! I got so interested in my painting that the time passed quicker than I thought."

"You do not suppose, of course, monsieur, that such reasons as those will satisfy me; you might, at least, have invented others; tell me again that you were awaiting your friend Miflaud, that he had kept you."

"I spoke the truth, madame, you are wrong to doubt my word. I was working, and that is what kept me late."

"You were working! and since when, if you please, have you developed such an ardent love for work? for it is quite contrary to what I know of you."

"I am surprised that you should say that, madame; for some time past we have had conversations on the subject. Yes, I have gone to work, and I intend hereafter to employ a part of my time — my resolution is taken, fixed, now, I shall not change it. I am ashamed of the life that I have led up to now; it must be ended. I have often enough manifested to you the desire I had to find some employment, and, instead of encouraging me in this design, you have always sought to make me forget my culpable position. I am not reproaching you, God forbid! each one loves in his own way, some for the pure pleasure of loving; others, for the happiness they experience in hearing the one they have chosen praised. I possess but one resource — painting. I may yet, by studying hard and working, acquire some skill. That is what I am going to try to do; I do not see why that should cause any rupture of my relations with you, for I assure you that pleasures seem sweeter when they succeed hours of work."

Casimir said this in a very decided tone, and in accents which impelled the conviction that his mind was fully made up; so that Madame Montémolly could not but understand that this time she would no longer triumph over her lover's resolution. Her

anger cooled then, for she knew enough of Casimir to understand that she would injure herself in his estimation should she again seek to thwart his plans. Instead of that she forced herself to assume her most gracious manner, and took his arm, saying,—

"My dear, forgive me, I was wrong; I won't reproach you again for working; but that need not prevent our walking out together sometimes, need it?"

"We'll go as soon as you like; I am delighted to find you so reasonable."

"Well, then, we will go and take a turn in the Bois; we can dine at Ledoyen's as we come back."

A fortnight passed, Casimir worked with assiduity at his little picture of the bridge and at Rouflard's head; the tenant of the garret posed regularly enough now that the sittings were held before breakfast. But the young man had not yet managed to vanquish little Lise's reluctance to allow him to paint her portrait. This was a matter of deep regret to the young painter; he had several times been up to his pretty neighbor's on the fifth floor; but he had never stayed very long there, for Lise seemed always to fear that the sight of the young man might vex her grandmother, and by showing his discretion Casimir hoped to gain the confidence of the young girl and her consent also.

He continued to give drawing lessons to Made-

moiselle Proh, who did not make the slightest progress, and passed a week over the same ear. He had also begun Madame Proh's portrait, but he worked slowly at it, infinitely preferring Rouflard's head. Finally, the young painter had finished his little landscape, and had disposed of it to a picture dealer in front of whose place connoisseurs often paused, because he frequently exposed very beautiful things, and rarely daubs.

One may easily suppose that the jealous Ambroisine had not accepted without pain and fear the new manner of life which her lover had begun to adopt; but she felt it was necessary that she should learn to make some concessions, so as not to lose her empire entirely. She saw Casimir much less; for instead of passing with her a part of each morning and afternoon, idling, as he had been accustomed to do, he now breakfasted at home, after which he worked, sometimes up to five o'clock in the afternoon; when he felt quite in the mood for it, when he was satisfied with what he was doing, he found it hard to drop his brushes, and he was quite surprised to find how rapidly the day would pass when consecrated to work — he who had formerly found the time quite long, and had never known how to employ it so as to avoid being bored.

Ambroisine, wishing to assure herself that Casimir had not deceived her, often went to his studio without forewarning him of her visit. She usually found him with his model posing for him, but as

it was only Rouflard, she was not disquieted by that; she had also, on one occasion, found Madame Proh, who was giving a sitting to her neighbor and had come to his studio to pose; but the professor's spouse did not arouse her jealousy. She had, therefore, no real reason to torment herself; but for all that she was not easy in her mind. It seemed to her that her lover was not the same with her; that, as his new love for study developed, the feeling he had formerly evinced for her had somewhat lessened. She did not quite know what was passing in Casimir's heart; but she divined that something had come between them which might destroy her happiness. Women have a sort of second sight which gives them presentiments of aught relating to their love. This necessarily led to a redoubling of the nervous attacks, and Mademoiselle Adrienne was very often sent to the pharmacy that we have already had the pleasure of introducing you to.

In hastening there one day — we know already how Adrienne hastened, stopping to talk to each acquaintance that she met — the buxom lass again found herself face to face with her friend Mademoiselle Rose; the one who had such a good place with a single gentleman who gave her presents, and had employed a polisher that she might not overtire herself.

"Good-day, Adrienne."

"Why, is that you, Rose? where are you going at that rate?"

"To the pastrycook's to order a chicken pie—our pastrycook makes delicious ones."

"Oh, I know him well, he is also ours; he's the best in the neighborhood."

"You are still with your nervous lady?"

"Oh, don't talk to me about her! for some time past she's been as cross as a bear; because the love affair no longer goes as she wishes—is on its last legs. I see that easily enough, for our sweetheart comes much less often. Madame pays great attention to her dress, makes herself look as nice as she can—I have an idea that he wants to leave her."

"Well, she'll have to take another, that's all."

"Oh, don't suppose it can be settled like that with us! why, we adore our painter, my dear, we would pull out our finest feathers for him."

"Oh, the lover is a painter? some poor dauber, I suppose."

"It seems he's been showing a great deal of talent lately; he's going to paint madame's portrait—it is she who wishes it—I shall have to get him to take mine while he's about it. And you, Rose, how smart you are—you are decked out like a jeweller's wife! You are still with your single gentleman?"

"At M. Loursain's? more comfortable than ever. I am rather his lady companion, than his maid; he does nothing without consulting me; today, it was I who wanted chicken pie for dinner, he said to me immediately, 'Go and order one.'"

"Did he, indeed?"

"No—I'm mistaken; he said to me, 'Go, Rose, and order one of the kind you like, with some meringues for dessert.'"

"Hang it! you are living in clover."

"Monsieur does nothing without consulting me. When one of his friends is tiresome to me, I say to him, 'Your friend chucked me under the chin yesterday,' and the latter's business is soon settled; for he is received in such a manner that he does not come again.'"

"Why, that's rather clever — that's a way of getting rid of people you don't care about."

"It's an old trick which never fails in its effect. But just imagine, Adrienne, what you said to me the other day came into my mind; and one evening after dinner, while we were eating our fruit, I said to monsieur, who was more loving than usual, 'Monsieur, if you would like to marry me, you need not be afraid to come to the point, for there's nothing I should like better.' Thereupon, monsieur began to laugh — why, to laugh like a madman; it made me vexed to see him laugh, and I said to him, 'Well, what is it that is so funny in what I propose to you?' He laughed again, then he answered, 'Where the devil did you get such an idea as that, Rose? and what foolishness even to dream of marriage.' 'Why, monsieur,' I resumed, 'I don't think marriage is foolishness.' 'Yes, it is, and very great foolishness; no, my dear, I shall not marry

you, I shan't make such a blunder as that; but then, even if I wished to do so, it would be impossible, since I am already married.'

"You can understand, Adrienne, that I was struck all of a heap when I heard that. 'What, monsieur, you are married?' cried I, 'and your wife is alive?' 'Yes, Rose, my wife is alive, and very much alive; and I don't believe she is thinking of dying, for she is very much younger than I!' 'And why don't you live with her then? Why do you live exactly as though you were a bachelor? That is deceiving everybody, monsieur, that gives young ladies ideas in regard to you — and they might receive your attentions, thinking your motives were good, and then afterwards find themselves all wrong; that's very disagreeable, that is.' Monsieur made a very cross face and answered, 'I am not accountable to you; if I left my wife, it was probably because it suited me, that has nothing to do with you. Hereafter, Rose, you will do me the favor of refraining from any reference to this subject, because it displeases me.' You may imagine that I did not let him say that twice; I saw that I had gone too far; and since that time I have not breathed a word of it. But, all the same, I should like to see this M. Loursain's wife, and know what he left her for."

"Mercy! you are a fine mischief, you are! She made his horns sprout, I warrant, and this gentleman thought that very wicked, no doubt; some

men are so ridiculous! But I'm forgetting all about the draught I was sent for. Good-by, Rose, till I see you again."

"What about the lemonade dealer who pleased you so much?"

"Oh, it isn't him now, it is someone else; I never stick to one, I like variety."

When Adrienne got back to her mistress, the latter scolded her for having taken so long to accomplish her errand, and the maid answered, with her invariable excuse,—

"It was not my fault, madame, I met a friend—a countrywoman of mine, whom I had not seen for a long time—and I inquired about her family."

"I should very much like to know how that can interest you."

"Rose has a brother, madame, who had like to have died for me."

"For love of you?"

"No, madame; but in trying to carry me a long way at arms' length, he became humpbacked."

"What does your friend do?"

"Oh, she has a fine place with a single gentleman, where she does just as she likes; she orders chicken pies whenever she likes — her master lets her do so — with meringues for dessert; regular feasts of Balthazar."

"He is rich, then, this gentleman?"

"Yes, madame. Oh, it seems that M. Loursain is very rich."

At the name of Loursain, Ambroisine experienced considerable emotion, which she quickly suppressed and resumed,—

"What do you say is the name of this gentleman with whom your friend lives?"

"M. Loursain. Does madame know him?"

"No, I thought I heard another name. And this gentleman is — a widower?"

"That is to say, madame, he lives as though he were; but in reality he is not. He has a wife — she is living. I learned all this through Rose, for he's madly in love with her; but he said to her in confidence, 'I can't marry you, my Rose, and I am very sorry for it, for I am married, and my wife unfortunately still lives; but if she should die you may be sure you shall have her place — your future is assured.' The vexatious part of it is that this lady is much younger than her husband — but then people die at all ages, don't they, madame?"

"Certainly! Does your friend's master live near here?"

"Yes, madame, in the Rue Béranger, which joins the end of our street. It seems this gentleman has a superb apartment, on the second floor front, and furnished in great style. Rose's room is in the apartment and is very convenient, because — you understand, madame. Rose did not wish to confess it to me, but it was just the same as if she had told me, for she betrayed herself — her master —"

"Enough! enough! I don't wish to know all

Mademoiselle Rose's love affairs; try not to talk so long another time when you are on an errand."

Left alone, Ambroisine remained for some time plunged in reflections, from which she emerged, saying,—

"M. Loursain is living too near me, I don't care to meet him; I must move."

CHAPTER VIII

Quinine Wine. The First Sitting

One morning Casimir was agreeably surprised by receiving a visit from the picture dealer with whom he had placed his little landscape. The dealer accosted him thus,—

"We have a purchaser at four hundred and fifty francs, will you let it go for that?"

The young painter feared that he had not heard aright, he opened his eyes wide, to assure himself that it was really his picture-dealer in front of him, and cried,—

"Four hundred and fifty francs, say you? is it for my view of Bougival they offer that?"

"Yes, if that suits you, it's a done thing, and you can go to the house presently and get your money."

"If it suits me? Why, I am delighted, it completes my happiness — I should never have dared to ask so much as that."

"I should have asked five hundred francs myself, and I am sure that if you will wait we shall end by getting that."

"No, no, I don't want to wait — sell it immediately; it seems to me that is a very good price

— besides, so long as they find that my pictures are worth anything I shall paint others."

"And you will do well. Work, M. Casimir, and occupy yourself with genre pictures rather than with any others. I believe that will be more profitable to you than portrait painting. You are a colorist, which is a gift of nature; I know some painters of talent who have not the slightest feeling for color. They have a face to paint, and they use the first thing that comes under their brush; the picture will be perfectly drawn and spirituel in pose, manner and thought, but above all that the dirty gray color is predominant, and deprives the picture of all the charm which it ought to have. These painters we need never ask for light or sun, it is impossible for them to put it in their pictures. Work, we will push you."

The dealer left. Casimir jumped and danced about his room. It was not the idea of getting four hundred francs that rendered him so joyous, thanks to the generosity of his mistress he often had larger sums than that at his disposal; but it was the thought that this money was the fruit of his work, that he had been able to earn it, and that in receiving it he could put it in his pocket without blushing. Nothing was now lacking to his happiness if his little neighbor on the fifth floor would only consent to let him paint her; he had not yet managed to vanquish her resistance; however, Rouflard had said to him the evening before,—

"I have an idea that little Lise will not be long before she lets you paint her, for the doctor who attends the old invalid comes to see her every day; he has ordered a new draught, which, I think, is called quinine wine. It seems the good lady has to take it every day, it is dear and the bottles are small, so it is soon taken. The young girl gets up earlier and goes to bed later to get this quinine wine; but I fear she finds it difficult to keep up the supply — would she not do a hundred times better to let you employ her as your model? I told her so yesterday. Go up there now, monsieur, I know women — as well, at any rate, as they can be known; with them one must seize the opportunity at the right moment."

Casimir asked nothing better than to follow Rouflard's advice; he went up again to little Lise's. Every time he visited the young girl he experienced a keen emotion, and his heart beat more quickly. However, he several times said to himself that he should not dream of paying court to Lise; the little girl was virtuous and it would be very ill done of him to try to lead her astray, to trouble her peace, and to deprive her of the feeling of honor which, as the poet says, "It is difficult to resume when once it has been forsaken."

Casimir said all this and a good deal more to himself, which did not prevent his looking at the young girl's pretty little face with eyes expressive of anything but indifference, and speaking to her

with a voice which unconsciously became softer and more insinuating.

For her part, Lise felt quite different since she had made the acquaintance of her neighbor on the third floor. He had shown himself so polite towards her, and, what was more, so respectful, that she asked herself why she should fear to accord him the favor he solicited. In fact, she asked herself that question very often; during the whole of the day she thought of Casimir, she could no longer help doing so. In spite of all her innocence, a girl of eighteen divines that it is very dangerous to be always thinking of a young man; and although this young man had not said a word of love to her, although he never saw her except in her grandmother's presence, she knew she ought to guard herself carefully from that feeling which slips into the heart, and above all not expose herself to love someone who did not think of her except to paint her portrait. It was fear of deriving too much pleasure from her young neighbor's visits that caused Lise to refuse to let him paint her.

But in the midst of all these cogitations came the prescription for the quinine in malaga wine. Those devilish doctors never trouble themselves about the position of their invalids; they prescribe that which is favorable to the restoration of health, and it is so much the worse for you if you cannot procure the medicine — they have performed their duty.

Lise had bought a small bottle of the wine prescribed; she had given it to the aged invalid to drink, and it had done her a great deal of good, but in six days the bottle had been all taken, and she had not the means to buy another.

Lise thought almost as much of this quinine wine as she did of Casimir, and as one thing very naturally leads to another, she could not help saying,—

"If I consented to pose, I should soon have enough to buy quinine wine."

Rouflard, therefore, had not been deceived in his conjectures, and, in fact, on seeing Casimir come into her room, Lise experienced a lively feeling of pleasure that she hid as well as she could as she greeted her neighbor pleasantly and indicated a chair to him, for she could not leave some work she was finishing."

"Good-day, little neighbor," said Casimir, "you see an extremely happy man."

"Indeed, monsieur, I am delighted to hear it; what has happened to afford you so much joy?"

"What has happened to me? oh, you can't perhaps quite understand it, for one must be an artist to know such joys as this. Mademoiselle, imagine an author whose first successful play has just appeared at the theatre, a composer who hears the tune he has written sung in the street, and the painter who has sold his first picture — they are the happiest men on earth! well, I am of that number, for I have just sold my first picture."

"Your first, monsieur, haven't you done more than one?"

Lise's very natural reflection made Casimir redden, for he quite understood that his little neighbor was putting the question to herself as to how he had employed his time if at his age he had only painted one picture. He tried to account for it by answering,—

"Mademoiselle — no, it is true that I set to work rather late at painting landscapes. I would much rather paint portraits, it affords me more satisfaction."

"And now you are giving up portrait painting to do landscapes?"

"Oh, no! give up portrait painting, never! the one does not interfere with the other. But I was so overjoyed this morning at the sale of my picture that I could not forbear informing you of my success — and then when one fortunate event happens, they say, several others follow; so I said to myself, 'Come, I'll go and see my pretty neighbor! Who knows whether today she will not also wish to let me paint her — Let me see if I can't break down her resistance."

"Would it render you still happier then, if I let you paint my portrait?"

"Why, mademoiselle, that would be the height of felicity for me; I should put all my care, all my talent into the work, and I am sure that I shall be successful, that I shall produce a charming head."

"But this portrait — do you wish to sell it, monsieur?"

"Sell your portrait? oh, never, neighbor, never! I shall keep it all my life; but I shall make a copy of it which I shall offer to you — or, if you like it better, I will give you the original and keep only the copy."

"But what will you do with my portrait in your rooms? it will only lumber them up."

"Lumber them up! why, it will be the chief ornament of my studio. I shall look at it every day, I shall never cease contemplating it, oh, my little neighbor, consent, please; say that you are quite willing!"

Lise still hesitated, for Casimir's eyes had an expression which stirred her vaguely; but at this moment the invalid, who had been dozing, awoke, saying,—

"Lise, give me a little of that wine, will you, that does me so much good?"

"Yes, dear grandmother, yes, presently; there is no more here, I must go and get some."

Then turning towards Casimir, Lise said to him, in a very low tone,—

"Well, I consent; I will pose for you tomorrow."

"Ah, how kind you are, and how happy am I! then I shall run to the pharmacy and buy you some quinine wine."

"No, no, I don't wish you to do that; I will go myself."

"You cannot leave your invalid; allow me to render you this slight service — I know that you take it in malaga."

"M. Casimir, I beg of you — "

"Let me do something agreeable for you in my turn; I am so very pleased at your consenting to pose. In malaga — you shall have some in a moment."

And without listening further to the young girl, Casimir quickly left her, — ran downstairs four steps at a time, just missed upsetting little Proh, who was trying to get astride the baluster of the landing, passed like a flash by the porter, ran to the nearest pharmacist's, asked for quinine in malaga wine, made them give him three bottles, put one in each of his side pockets, hid the third under his sack coat, and returned to little Lise as quickly as he had left her.

"Good heavens! you have brought three bottles!" cried the young girl, as she saw Casimir draw them from his pockets.

"Yes, neighbor, you will have it for some time without troubling yourself about it."

"But it isn't necessary — why, monsieur, that costs three francs ten sous a bottle."

"Oh, well, in two sittings you will have paid me."

"Oh, monsieur, that isn't possible!"

"Excuse me, neighbor, I swear that a model such as you is never paid less, and that I shall

still be under an obligation to you. But will you not tell me at what time you will be willing for me to come for the sitting?"

"Early morning is always the time when my grandmamma rests the best, monsieur, and does not need my care; if it will not put you out at all to come at eight o'clock — but perhaps that is too early for you?"

"Not at all; on the contrary, the time suits me very well; we will pose from eight to ten if you like, for I don't wish to tire you and two hours will perhaps be rather too much for you."

"Oh, no, monsieur; besides, you told me that I could sew while posing."

"Yes, yes, you may do just as you like; so long as I can see you, that is enough."

"I thought your model was also obliged to look at you?"

"Sometimes, no doubt, it is much better that she should; but we have plenty of time, and when it shall be absolutely necessary, then you can for a moment lift your eyes from your work. So it is agreed that tomorrow morning, my little neighbor, at eight o'clock, you will see me arrive with all my baggage."

"I shall be ready, monsieur."

Casimir was gone, and Lise approached the old invalid, saying,—

"Grandmamma, here is some quinine wine."

Delighted with his day, Casimir left his new

model's and went to see Ambroisine, whom he wished to inform of the sale of his picture. He was not quite certain that she would share his satisfaction, but he was desirous that she should learn that his work would put him beyond the need of help from anybody else.

As to that which he was about to obtain from Lise, he was careful to abstain from saying a single word to his mistress, for he was well aware of her excessive jealousy; he hoped heartily, on the contrary, that she would remain in ignorance of his relations with his little neighbor; which was really why he was delighted when the latter proposed to give him sittings at eight o'clock in the morning; from eight to ten he was not afraid of receiving Ambroisine's visits, for she habitually rose very late; and if, by any chance, she should come to see him before he had come down from the fifth floor, he could then say that he had been to breakfast at the café.

On his way out of the house, Casimir had met Rouflard, and the man of the garret, struck by the joyful, triumphant expression of the young painter, had exclaimed,—

"I'll wager it is all settled as you wish."

"Yes, Rouflard, yes; little Lise is willing that I should make a study of her head. I am very much pleased."

"I knew well it would end so; women are like that, they always make one beg and pray a little."

"Tomorrow morning, at eight o'clock, I shall go up to her with my canvas and palette, and she will give me the first sitting."

"When a woman has given one sitting, she will give you as many as you please later on; it's a matter of course, then — it is like taking the first step."

"But, Rouflard — this is between ourselves — should you happen to be posing for me when that lady comes to visit me — you know whom I mean — the beautiful brunette whom I call Ambroisine, who has been here several times already —"

"Yes, yes, Madame the First — the Sultana Validé, I know!"

"Well, I need not tell you that it is unnecessary to breathe a word to her of my visits to Lise, or of my painting the latter's portrait."

"The idea of saying that to me, my artist; a veteran in the service of Dan Cupid. I don't look like a novice, do I? I should be sorry to cause the slightest annoyance to my little benefactress."

"You are right, Rouflard; I ought to have known you would not tell tales."

"As to Chausson, my former domestic, he's not bad at bottom; if you like, I will speak to him."

"No, no, that is needless; that is my lookout."

"It's rather those Proh-Prohs you must mistrust, for they are gossips, chatterers, story-tellers, who are delighted when they know what is going on at their neighbors', and have a way of making mountains out of molehills."

"I shall be careful that they learn nothing of my visits to Lise's, and I shall endeavor to finish my portrait of Madame Proh as soon as possible, so that her visits to me may cease."

"Now that is a portrait that I should not care to have in my scrapbook, unless it were to act as a medicine."

"Rouflard, I have sold my little landscape; take this and give yourself a treat; I am happy today, and I want everybody to be at least content."

"That is speaking as Buckingham acted — you were born to strew pearls upon your way, and I to pick them up."

Casimir found his mistress just finishing dressing, she was getting ready to go to his house.

"You here! why that is indeed fortunate," cried Ambroisine, "every day you come later, by-and-by, I suppose, you will cease to come at all."

"My dearest, you must excuse me, for I have been very busy today."

"Yes, making your old drunkard pose — how interesting that is!"

"No, Rouflard has not posed for me today, but I've had a visit from my picture dealer; congratulate me, my little landscape is sold."

The fair dame frowned, compressed her lips, and answered,—

"Ah, your landscape is sold!"

"Yes, and very well sold, too; for a great deal more than I should have dared to ask."

"Because you are too modest — you are wrong; in art it is foolish to be modest, for that is a merit of which no one takes any account, and which often prevents a person from being successful. How much did they pay for your picture, may I ask?"

"Four hundred and fifty francs."

"What a trifle — and that is what you call well sold; I thought you were going to tell me two or three thousand francs."

"Ah, madame, you are making fun of me, you know well that this little landscape is not worth that — the price is very good as a beginning; it will encourage me and I shall work in such fashion as to get more for those I do later on."

"Oh, so you expect to paint other genre pictures — you are giving up portrait painting; then, you probably will not finish mine — for which work you do not evince any great ardor."

"How unjust you are! — I always have to ask you to pose; but when you have done so for a quarter of an hour you've had enough of it, and can keep still no longer."

"It makes me so dreadfully nervous. Come, I am wrong, I will confess it — hereafter, my dear, I will be more reasonable; I'll go to your place first thing in the morning and I won't stir from there; if I do so, you will be able to have me pose whenever you wish."

This time it was Casimir who bit his lips and

frowned slightly. It is to be noted that in a tête-à-tête these varying expressions of the face convey what the tongue does not say, or signify quite the contrary to what it does say. For much as one may wish to conceal his thought, it will at times break through the mutinous mask which conventionality has imposed upon us.

Ambroisine wished to go for a walk into the country. Casimir cheerfully agreed to this, for he had brought his sketch book and would take some notes, sketch some views.

"What if we were to go to Switzerland?" said the handsome brunette. "There you would find admirable views and there you could make ample provision of rough sketches for your genre pictures."

But the young painter was not disposed to travel.

"No need to go so far afield," said he; "there are charming views in the vicinity of the city which no one thinks of painting because they lie at the very gates of Paris, and we always accord more value to what is at a distance. For my part I don't see, my dear, why one should go in search of a thing which one can get without trouble or expense. Thus, for instance, quite near here, behind the fort at Romainville, in that part which was formerly the wood, there are magnificent views, you may see an immense expanse of land spread out before you, often for a dozen leagues around. At your feet is Pantin with its cemented arches, which add to the picturesqueness of the country,

then there's the canal, which cuts the road, then a little farther on are Saint-Denis, Montmorency, and Pierrefitte. On the left Montmartre, Mount Valerien, Saint-Cloud bound the horizon, and the whole is interspersed with clumps of trees, pretty villas, factories. I assure you, it is an admirable panorama. Will you not give me the pleasure of taking you to see it?"

Madame de Montémolly allowed herself to be conducted to what had formerly been the wood at Romainville, and tried to pick some field flowers, while Casimir seated himself on the grass and hastily sketched some views, but the flowers are rare in clay, and the soil that is good to make pottery does not grow roses. Besides, Ambroisine was always petulant and wilful, the woman of moods, she soon tired of this as of everything and she now drew her companion away, saying to him,—

"My dear, you told me fine tales; your beautiful views of Romainville are not half so good, to my mind, as the cascade and the lake in the Bois-de-Boulogne."

"To you, my dear lady, I concede it may appear so; pardon me, I will not ask you to come this way again — one must be a painter, an artist, to appreciate such scenery as this," said Casimir who was greatly disappointed.

"My dear, we must return to our victoria, which could not follow us over these unequal roads, where

one is in danger of falling into a hole at every step or of being buried in sand. Come and dine at Le Doyen in the Champs Élysées, that will give us a complete change."

"That is just like women! and yet you talk of going to Switzerland; there the roads are steep and difficult to climb, if you like."

"Yes, my dear, but one is in Switzerland, one writes one's name on the inn registers, and people see that Monsieur and Madame So-and-So, passed that way, and ventured the ascent of the Righi."

This day had passed very slowly for the young painter, who was longing for the moment when he could paint little Lise's portrait; and although he did his best to be as pleasant and cheerful with Ambroisine as he usually was, he sometimes had moments of abstraction which did not escape his jealous mistress; then the latter would say,—

"What are you thinking of now?"

"Me, why of nothing, I was listening to you."

"Listening to me! what have I just said?"

"What have you just said? Faith, I don't remember; was it something very interesting?"

"You see you were not listening. Why, Casimir, I don't know what is the matter with you, but there surely is something. You are dreamy, you answer at cross purposes everything I say to you. Oh, there's something underhand in all this."

"I have sold my picture and I was thinking of what I shall do next, that is all."

"You are lying — that was not what you were thinking of. Oh, I know all about that; you can't deceive me."

"So much the worse for you, for the happiest people are those who are the most easily deceived."

"That is possible, but I don't wish that kind of happiness."

Finally the day had passed, and the night also; Casimir rose early, chose his canvas, prepared his palette, and put an easel in order which he had not used for some time and which he expected to leave at his neighbor's, so as not to have the trouble of carrying it up and down for each sitting. He kept looking at his watch, for he was afraid of being indiscreet and arriving before the hour agreed on.

Eight o'clock struck; Casimir opened the door which led onto the landing, to make sure there was no one about, then he took the objects of which he had need and slowly mounted the two flights.

The key was in Lise's door; but she herself came to open it, for she had heard him coming and knew it must be the person she was expecting.

"Mercy, monsieur, how you are loaded!" cried Lise, offering to relieve Casimir of his easel.

"It's all very light, mademoiselle; you need give yourself no trouble. May I come in?"

"Certainly. Grandmamma is asleep, I think; but even if she is awake I told her yesterday that you were coming to paint my portrait, and she was very much pleased at it. She said to me, 'You must

place yourself in front of me, so I may see you all the time, my dear daughter.' Oh, she is very fond of me, my poor mother."

"You see, my dear neighbor, that in consenting to allow yourself to be painted you have already made two people happy."

"That is true. If I had known I should have accepted sooner. I think grandmamma is asleep —we will make no noise."

"I need make none in working. There now, my easel is in place, and I am at your orders."

"Why, it is for you to give your orders, how must I place myself?"

"As you usually do; sit down and take up your work."

"What! may I really work?"

"Of course, at any rate during the first sitting, when I shall not do more than attempt the mere outline of the head."

"And I need not look at you?"

"Yes, sometimes, but not always."

They both set to work. Lise was hemming, which did not require close attention. From time to time Casimir would say, "Look at me!" which she did, then quickly lowered her eyes again, because she met those of the young painter, who then would say,—

"But you don't look at me long enough, I could hardly snatch a glimpse of your eyes."

"But you were looking at me so earnestly that it intimidated me, troubled me."

"I must scrutinize you very closely if I am to reproduce your features on canvas, but that should not make you feel timid. You must think of me only as an artist, as a workman who is following his trade, and then you will not feel embarrassed."

"Why, a workman! you are not a workman!"

"By Jove! my dear neighbor, we are all of us workmen, each in his kind; is not a man a workman directly he begins to employ himself to make a living. There are, you will tell me, professions which demand more study, more intelligence than others; but rest assured that the poet or the writer who works with his mind, who carries his materials in his brain, is sometimes far more fatigued with his labor than the carpenter in planing his planks. Look at me a little now."

Lise raised her eyes, and this time she did not lower them quite so quickly on meeting those of Casimir. The latter liked to make his model talk, as no painter of real talent fears to do; for they can seize the expression of a person's face better while he is speaking than do those who forbid their subjects to move, which makes them look bored, or affected, or stilted and unnatural, or, I might even say, stupid.

Lise desired nothing better than to talk; during her nurse's life, when the latter kept a creamery and was doing well in business, she had on three different occasions taken the young girl to the theatre, and the latter had always remembered

it, for she had taken great delight in it. This amusement and reading were the only ones she desired; dancing, walking, country festivals had little attraction for her. Before her illness, the old woman had wished the little girl to have some amusement; but instead of going to look on at the so-called bals champêtres which are held on the outskirts of Paris, Lise would lead her companion by the least frequented way to some solitary, shady lane, and there would seat herself on the grass and read a novel which she had managed to hire by economizing on some article of food. She would read aloud; her old grandmother would go to sleep, but Lise would read on, and both would be satisfied.

"If you are fond of reading," said Casimir, "I can lend you some books, I have all Alexandre Dumas' works, and I am quite sure you will find them charming."

"Ah, monsieur, you are very kind; but since grandmamma has fallen ill, I have no time to read; it is better to work."

"One must snatch a few moments' rest though."

"The work that I do is not fatiguing."

For the first sitting Casimir did not want to keep his model too long; he rose, saying,—

"That's enough of it for today; thank you, my little neighbor."

"Is it finished?"

"Finished for today; will you allow me to leave this easel here?"

"Why, certainly. Ah, you are going to take the canvas — you won't need it except here, will you?"

"Pardon me, there are some things at which I can work without having the model under my eyes."

"Will you let me look at it?"

"Not yet, I beg of you. It's not advanced enough yet; in three or four sittings you may look at it. It is ten o'clock, I am going to breakfast."

"Ten already! it's singular how quickly the time passes when one is posing. Are you coming tomorrow?"

"Why, certainly, if it does not put you out."

"Oh, not at all."

The young girl was going to add, "Quite the contrary," but she stopped, colored, and confined herself to murmuring,—

"Good-by, till tomorrow, then."

The next morning Casimir did not fail to repair to his charming model's, who saw him arrive now with pleasure; and who, without being a coquette, had been careful to arrange her hair becomingly; the young painter noticed this and, though he said nothing, he was in secret flattered, for there are a number of little things which predict greater ones.

She posed, and they talked in a half whisper; it was almost always in the morning that the grandmother rested best. Lise raised her eyes to the painter more often now — and was better able to

sustain the ardor of his looks; sometimes, however, a vivid red would rise to her face, while Casimir would murmur,—

"How well you pose, what a charming portrait I shall make; yes, it will be very like you, for your features are graven on my memory."

"Then it was not worth while for me to look at you."

"Oh, yes, yes, I can never see enough of you."

"How fortunate you are to be able to paint."

"Yes, I think so now myself; and yet there was a time when I did not suspect I could do it. Oh, my little neighbor, you do not know that if I should ever manage to acquire aptitude that leads to success, it will be you to whom I shall owe it."

"To me, why, the idea! it was not by having me for your model that you painted the pretty landscape you have sold."

"No, but because I saw you in this modest room, working without relaxation, and because I learned that by your labor you managed to supply the needs of a poor old paralytic grandmother, it occurred to me, one day, to regret my ill-spent youth and I then firmly resolved to change my conduct. So you see, my dear neighbor, that should I at some future day acquire success and reputation I shall owe it all to you — to the force of your example."

Lise made no reply to this speech, for she was too deeply moved; but her gaze was fixed on

Casimir, and its expression was so tender, so touching, that this time it was the painter who had ceased to work.

These confidential conversations were each day renewed and added to the intimacy of the connection which existed between the painter and his model. Little by little an amiable confidence replaced the cold politeness. They talked more, the sittings were longer, it became difficult for them to part, for they always had something more to say; they liked to be together so well that the young girl grew impatient and opened her door when Casimir was some minutes late. However, there had never been a word of love during the sittings of all these mornings; but there are a great many things which do not need to be expressed in words, and love is one of these things.

The portrait approached completion; but as Casimir wished to prolong the sittings for some time, he still found some further touches to make. Lise did not complain; far from it. When her painter would say, "There! that is enough for today," it happened sometimes that she would exclaim,—

"Already? why, it seems to me that I have not posed long this morning."

Then Casimir would smile, and they would continue to talk. The young girl when she first looked at the portrait, had jumped with joy on seeing that it was so pretty. She had exclaimed,—

"Oh, you have flattered me, monsieur — I am not — like that."

She had not dared to say, "So good-looking as that." But women often stop just when they are going to say what is at the bottom of their hearts.

CHAPTER IX

An Enfant Terrible. The Lady on the First Floor

Lise's portrait often made Casimir neglect that of Ambroisine, and it was not alone in painting that the fine lady found her lover negligent. Every day the young man went later to Madame Montémolly's house; and when she reproached him he would offer as excuses the new landscape he was painting, or the sittings he was giving to Madame Proh and Rouflard, and Ambroisine would exclaim,—

"Why, it is impossible that you have not finished with those heads, and when I ask you to let me pose for you, you tell me that you don't wish to tire me. You have some love affair, have formed some new connection — but beware! I shall learn all about it."

One morning Madame Montémolly, without having notified her lover of her visit, rose much earlier than she was in the habit of doing, had herself hastily dressed by Adrienne, and reached Casimir's at ten o'clock. She asked the porter if the young man had gone out; Chausson told her he had not come down yet; so she went up the three

flights, saw the key in the door of the painter's apartment, and went in without knocking or ringing, saying to herself,—

"I am going to surprise him, and to learn at what he is working so assiduously."

Ambroisine went into the small room which served as Casimir's studio, but she found only Rouflard there; the latter was trying the effect of certain poses in a mirror.

"M. Casimir is not here?" inquired the lady, glancing all round the room.

Rouflard, who had recognized the lady, divined the situation, bowed deeply and answered,—

"No, madame, M. Dernold has gone out."

Despite this answer, Ambroisine went to look in the bedroom, and then came back, saying,—

"Yes, he really is not there."

"Madame is certain of it," muttered Rouflard, with a slightly ironical smile.

"But where is he? is he soon coming back?"

"Oh, I think not, madame; M. Dernold said, 'I am going to get some breakfast; then, later on, I shall take a turn in the Louvre, where I have some studies to make.'"

"That is singular, the porter told me M. Casimir had not gone out."

"That wretched Chausson never sees who passes, madame; he made a good many other mistakes when he was my servant. I would say to him, 'Keep a sharp look-out, don't let any of my credi-

tors get by you, I wish to receive ladies only '— and the idiot would do exactly the contrary. I think he has had a sunstroke."

"But what are you doing here, in that case, monsieur?"

"Me, madame, I came to thank my artist, who has had the kindness to take a good deal of trouble for me, and has found me employment with a painter, one of his friends, a historical painter, I am to pose as a Roman. And M. Casimir said to me, 'See that your head is got up like a Roman's, stand before the glass — put a red band through your hair, and I'll tell you later on whether you make a good Romulus '— for it seems it is Romulus that I am to represent."

Ambroisine did not seem to place much faith in this Roman history. She walked about the studio, paused for a moment, seemed to reflect, and said,—

"I don't know whether I ought to wait or not."

"Madame, you are at liberty to do so, certainly; but I fear you will wait for a very long time. When a painter goes to the Louvre, one never knows when he will leave it."

"M. Rouflard, do you often come to this studio?"

"Yes, madame, I am always at the orders of my artist when he has need of me."

"And do you see many women come here? Don't lie to me!"

"Madame, I can assure you solemnly that I have never seen any but you and the neighbor opposite; but I don't call the latter a woman — her husband has christened her the giraffe, and he has done well."

"Come, I believe you — and I am going. You will tell him I was here, and that I am waiting at home for him, will you not?"

"Madame, I shall not fail to do so."

Ambroisine left the apartment, Rouflard conducted her as far as the landing; but there they found themselves face to face with Madame Proh and her son, the young Phonphonse, who was again endeavoring to slide down the banisters. Casimir's mistress had met the lady once or twice when she was posing, and therefore knew her a little. They bowed and exchanged some ordinary phrases.

"Madame, I am happy to meet you; you seem to be in your usual perfect health?"

"I am passably well, madame, I thank you. Are you going to M. Casimir's?"

"No, madame, I was not going there at this moment. I am going to buy some calf's head for my husband, who likes nothing else for his breakfast. He has taken such a liking for anything with vinegar. My husband is quite unbearable with his calf's head. Did you come from my neighbor's, M. Casimir's?"

"Yes, I intended to give him a sitting for my portrait."

"Mine is finished, quite finished; I am very greatly pleased with it, for every one asserts that I resemble the late Madame 'Sagni' in her youth —it seems she was rather a pretty woman. And you have finished posing already, madame?"

"I could not have a sitting, M. Casimir was not there. It vexed me, for I got up earlier than usual this morning."

"So my neighbor's already gone out?"

"No, no! he hasn't gone out! Oh, oh, oh! hi, hi, hi!" shouted little Phonphonse, placing himself astride the baluster.

"Phonphonse, don't slide like that on the baluster, you'll hurt yourself."

"I want to slide, I do."

"This child is indomitable."

"Pardon, madame, but it seems to me your son said that M. Casimir had not gone out."

"Oh, madame, as if this child knows what he is talking about."

"Yes, yes, I do know where the painter is; he is where he goes every morning. Oh, oh, oh! hi, hi, hi!"

"Where he goes every morning? Why you see very well that M. Casimir is out, Alphonse."

"No, he ain't, because he's upstairs in the house; at little Lise's — he has taken his easel up there, and his colors, so he can paint like he does down here. Hi, hi, hi! ho! oh! oh!"

Ambroisine had changed color; Madame Proh opened her eyes wide, exclaiming,—

"What! my neighbor goes to paint at that little girl's on the fifth floor. The idea! that's the first I've heard of it; but this little fellow here is most extraordinary, madame, he knows all he sees, all that passes from here; he would hear a breeze come in at the first floor."

"Who is this little Lise who receives M. Casimir?"

"She's a young girl who lives with her grandmother; the latter is an invalid, is partly paralyzed. Lise works to support her — oh, she is honest — very honest — at least, I think so."

"She is pretty?"

"Hum! well, you know, that all depends on the taste — she has a little irregular face."

"No, no, no, Lise is not irregular; Rouflard says she is an angel — oh, oh, oh! ah, ah, ah!"

"Oh, this Rouflard knows her? Pardon me, madame, but as it is absolutely necessary that I should speak to M. Casimir, I am going to take the liberty of going to this young lady's to look for him,—it is on the fifth floor, I think you said?"

"Yes, the door to the right."

"The key is always outside, hu, hu, hu!"

The fine lady listened no further, she mounted the flights of stairs like a brave soldier mounting to the assault. She was soon there; she found, in fact, the key in the door to the right; she opened it suddenly, and saw Lise, who was seated in front of Casimir holding her work in her hand, but not

The fine lady . . . saw Lise, who was seated in front of Casimir.

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working; for his part the young painter was at his easel, he held his palette and his paint brush, but he was not using them. At sight of the person who had opened the door, and who stood motionless at the entrance to the chamber, the artist and his model remained struck with surprise. But Casimir was the most moved, Lise recovered herself immediately and said to Ambroisine,—

"It is no doubt me whom you wish to see, madame; is it about some work? Please come in."

"No, mademoiselle," answered Ambroisine, in an arrogant tone, "it was not you I wanted, it was not for you I came here. It was monsieur I came to look for, monsieur who has not a moment to give me, and who cannot finish my picture because he is painting yours. So here is the cause of all your falsehoods, of your change of conduct towards me — I knew well there was some underhand intrigue there — it was to be with mademoiselle that you could not spare time to come and see me. Ah, how false men are!"

The jealous woman's voice became piercing, her eyes darted lightning. Lise was trembling, big tears obscured her eyes, when a feeble, faltering voice was heard from the bed, saying,—

"Lise, what is the matter? it seems to me some one is shouting here — are you quarrelling with anyone?"

"No, grandma, no; it is nothing, it is nothing."

And the young girl turned imploring eyes on

"Do you think, monsieur, that I believe in your stories, your fairy tales — you take me for a simpleton, apparently. You have not said one word of love to this damsel! and pray what were you doing, then, when I came in? you were not painting, you and your model, you were looking into each other's eyes as if you wanted to devour each other; people have no need to speak of love when they look at each other like that, the eyes can speak it just as well! and, if you had no thought of becoming this girl's lover, why have you made such a mystery of this portrait? of your escapades on the fifth floor? and what do you expect to do with this young lady's portrait?"

"It is a study, I shall put it in my studio."

"You know very well that I'll tear it to pieces. And this miserable Rouflard, whom you taught his lesson, and who told me you had gone to the Louvre! Everyone understands how to make game of me, it seems."

"I did not give Rouflard any lesson, he told you just what he pleased."

"That is enough! that such a thing may not happen again, monsieur, you are going to leave this apartment immediately and you won't put your foot into this house again; in this way you will not have the fancy to go up every morning to the fifth floor — come with me, I shall immediately go and find you a more suitable lodging and then I shall send and get your furniture."

Casimir shrugged his shoulders and continued to paint, as he said quietly,—

"You are mad, madame!"

"What is that you are saying?"

"That you have no common sense, and that I have not the slightest desire to move."

"You won't move because you don't want to leave the little girl of the garret?"

"The little girl of the garret, as you are pleased to call her, has nothing to do with my determination; I will not leave this apartment, because it pleases me and also because I will not do as you wish — I am tired of being your slave, and it is time it should stop."

"Ah, that is what you want to arrive at, is it? it is a rupture that you propose to me?"

"Let it be a rupture if you like, madame, but I repeat that I will not submit to all your caprices, and that I will not move."

"Casimir, take care! if you stay in this house I shall never forgive you.''

"I shall stay here."

"And you sacrifice me to this little humbug of a girl! why, it is unworthy of you! it is infamous."

"No high-flown language, madame; you know it will fail of its effect; I sacrifice you to no one. I merely tell you that I will no longer be your slave, that I have been so too long already, that I wish to be my own master — if that does not suit you, so much the worse."

"It is because you no longer love me that you speak to me thus."

"Come, Ambroisine, be frank; if I were to follow your orders, you would despise me, and you would be right."

"Ah, you are a traitor — you have been playing with me, but I will no longer be your dupe — after all I have done for you!"

"Oh, I expected that word! without it the situation would have lacked something. In fact, madame, you have done much for me and I shall not forget it; allow me only to tell you that it was always against my will; that for a long time past I have wanted to devote myself to work, and you invariably tried to prevent me, because you wanted to keep me in your toils and prevent me from being free and capable of acting without consulting you. Should fortune some day prove favorable to me, madame, believe me, I shall be happy to be able to acquit myself of the debt I owe you."

"Casimir, forget what I have said to you; jealousy led me astray — Come now, yield to me just this once, I beg of you. Come with me — leave this house — I won't speak to you again of that little girl of the garret."

"Your insistence is useless, my resolution is unalterable; I shall remain in this apartment."

Ambroisine rose, furious, took a few steps in the room, paused in front of Casimir and cried,—

"Then, monsieur, all is ended between us."

"Just as you please, madame."

"Yes, monsieur, all is over between us, and I will never willingly see you again in my life."

After these words Ambroisine went out quickly, and, banging the door after her, went down the staircase without stopping, then crossed the court, passed the porter and his broom, and took a few steps in the street; then she stopped, turned and looked at the house she had just left, and perceiving a writing attached to the top of the door, she immediately re-entered the house, and said to the porter, who was again in the court,—

"You have something to let here; I saw a notice."

"Yes, madame, a fine apartment on the first floor; seven rooms, freshly papered all over, a beautiful cellar."

"When will it be ready for occupancy?"

"In ten days, madame, that is the term."

"I will take it."

"The price is two thousand two hundred francs."

"That is all right, I will rent it."

"But madame has not seen it; if she likes to go up — the tenants have just gone out."

"It is needless, I repeat to you I will take this apartment. Wait, porter, here is your earnest money."

And Ambroisine put a twenty-franc piece into Chausson's hand, adding,—

"Take this! only I shall be much obliged if

you will not tell M. Casimir that it is I who have taken this apartment. Here is my address, my name, if you wish to go and inquire about me."

"Oh, madame, I can see well enough that that is unnecessary — when a person has manners like madame — besides madame is an acquaintance of M. Casimir's."

"Wait! here are twenty francs more — be discreet and I shall not stop there!"

"I shall be at madame's service day and night! always on foot."

Ambroisine departed, and Chausson gloated over the two twenty-franc pieces as he muttered to himself,—

"She is the cream of tenants — I think I see myself going to ask for information about her."

Ten minutes after Ambroisine's departure, Casimir went up to the fifth floor and into his young neighbor's.

Lise was sewing, but big tears rolled from her eyes and now and then dropped on her work. Her pretty face seemed still more charming beneath the cloud of sadness which obscured all her features. When she saw Casimir, her first movement was to wipe her eyes and try to smile.

But the young man had already seen her tears, he hastened to her, exclaiming,—

"Lise, you are weeping, and it is I who have caused your tears! Ah! forgive me! If you knew how sorry I am for what has happened."

"Oh, monsieur, I don't bear you any grudge at all; but if she comes back and should find you here, she will make another scene; that will frighten my grandmother, and I won't have that."

"That lady will not come back here; besides, she has no right to prevent my doing as it suits me. I have known her for a long time and she has got into a habit of giving me advice, and I have listened — as one does listen to an old acquaintance."

"She is older than you are?"

"Yes, and that is why I have shown her deference. But that is no reason why she should treat me as a child."

"She is a very handsome lady — but she looked at me with such a wicked expression that it frightened me."

"Think no more about her; you will not see her again."

"It seems to me I should have been pleased to see her, if she had not made such terrible eyes. M. Casimir, you must take your easel away and not come here again to paint."

"My dear neighbor, I hope you will give me sittings again, when I shall need them. You would not like me to leave my work in an imperfect condition — your head is a study which will do me much honor, I hope; allow me, therefore, to finish it carefully, and to remit that which I owe you for all the sittings which you have given me."

"Why, monsieur, you owe me nothing, you bought me some quinine wine."

"Oh, my dear neighbor, that hardly pays for three sittings. But you posed at least ten times, and I am paying you very stingily in giving you this."

Casimir put thirty francs on a table, returned to take the young girl's hand, pressed it tenderly between his own, and said to her,—

"You will not cry any more, will you? Promise me to forget the scene of this morning, and to give me another sitting?"

Lise smiled and answered,—

"I must, since you wish it!" and Casimir departed, quite satisfied.

The next day after this rather unfortunate one, Rouflard, who went every morning to Casimir's to find out if he had any commissions to give him, said to the young painter,—

"I've just been to see my good angel, little Lise; she is as happy as a queen, and that thanks to you, monsieur."

"Thanks to me? how is that, Rouflard?"

"Because, with the money you gave her yesterday, she has bought a silver spoon for her grandmamma — a very handsome spoon which cost her twenty-two francs. The old invalid is delighted; it was her hobby to possess a silver spoon, and it seems to have restored a part of her strength."

"I am delighted to have been able to ameliorate

Lise's position a little, for she is killing herself with work. But how about yourself, Rouflard; have you posed for the painter to whom I sent you?"

"Yes, monsieur; not as a Roman, but as a clown. As for that, it is exactly the same to me; to pose for a hero or a robber, it is still to pose."

Some days rolled by, Casimir had not spent one without going up to see Lise, who had showed him the beautiful silver spoon.

"I am very much pleased," she said, "only would you believe it, monsieur, that I dream every night that someone has stolen it from me. It gives me the nightmare."

"That will pass off, little neighbor, one can get used to everything, even to silver dish covers."

Casimir had not been to Madame Montémolly's house, and to his great surprise he had heard nothing further of her since their rupture. He congratulated himself on having finally broken a chain which he could no longer bear, and gave himself up with ardor to his work, for he wished to be able to earn sufficient for himself. His small genre picture was getting on very well, the picture dealer had been to see it, and was much pleased with it, and had even offered to advance him money on it if he needed it.

But in going and coming about the house Rouflard, who often talked with the porter, noticed the day before quarter day, while the tenant of the first floor was moving, that Chausson was rubbing

his hands and that he seemed very impatient for the moving to be over, and when everything had been taken away he set to work to wax the landing of the first floor, to sweep the empty apartment carefully, and to make sure that all was in order, and that there were no spiders' webs anywhere.

"Devil take it, Chausson! how you are going it in your first floor?" said Rouflard to the porter; "you didn't do so much rubbing as that in my place in my palmy days."

"In your palmy days, Rouflard, you never had so splendid an apartment."

"Is your first floor let?"

"Yes, certainly it's let; and jolly well let, too. I presume they will move in tomorrow. I made the others go today, so as to have time to put everything in order here. Ha, ha! I wanted them to be flattered to see everything shining here."

"Is it a dentist who is coming into the house?"

"A dentist! oh, no, it is not a dentist; it is a lady — and a very beautiful woman too."

"I understand, a gay woman of the first class."

"No, monsieur! as if I would let apartments to gay women; as if the house was not respectable except for you."

"Chausson, don't insult me; it would be difficult for you to find a man of my kind to live in your garret."

"Yes, when you are not tipsy you still have a good enough presence."

"And your beautiful lady, has she a husband?"

"No—at least, I don't think so. After all, since she will come in tomorrow I may as well tell you who she is, but only you."

"Do I know her?"

"You have seen her at M. Casimir's; it is she who came to see him so often; formerly, that is, —for she has not been back since she took the place."

"What! is it Madame Montémolly who has rented your apartment on the first floor?"

"Precisely, Madame Montémolly, that is indeed the name that is on her card."

"Ah, confound it!"

Rouflard hurried up to the painter's and said to him,—

"I come to tell you some news; the apartment on the first floor has been rented by Madame Montémolly, and she moves in tomorrow."

Casimir was astounded; he had thought himself delivered for ever from Ambroisine, and she was coming to live in the house with him; he did not doubt but what it was to spy on his conduct and assure herself as to the connection which existed between him and the young girl on the fifth floor. This connection was very innocent, but in the eyes of the world, which seeks everywhere the evil and never the good, they must appear culpable. What Casimir feared above everything was that the frequent visits he had paid to Lise might bring upon

her a repetition of a disagreeable scene. He was on the point of going up to his little neighbor to warn her of what was about to happen; but he said to himself, "Of what use is it to frighten her in advance; let us wait, Ambroisine has perhaps not rented it for herself; it is still possible that she will not move in tomorrow."

But the next day doubt was no longer possible; they were moving into the first floor, and it was indeed his former mistress of whom Casimir witnessed the arrival; he heard already on the staircase the shouting of her servant Adrienne, who was greatly vexed that they had left the apartment of the Rue Meslée, which looked on to the boulevard, to come and live in the Rue Paradis-Poissonière and take an apartment where the maid's room was under the same key as those of her mistress. Then the young painter decided to go up to Lise. From his troubled look and agitated manner the young girl guessed that some vexatious event had happened, and said to him,—

"Something has happened to you; has that lady come to see you? is she coming up here?"

"No, no, it is not that Lise; but, still, it is something that will vex you, I am sure."

"What is it? tell me."

"That lady — for the matter does concern her, — the apartment on the first floor was to let for the term, you knew of it, no doubt?"

"Me! not at all; do you suppose I occupy

myself with what is going on in the house? Well, what about the apartment?"

"It is taken by — by that lady."

"The one who came here?"

"Yes."

"Oh, good heavens! and she will come here shortly?"

"She moves here today."

"She is here! in the house. Oh, go home, M. Casimir, go home as quickly as you can; if she should come up and find you here — I am afraid of that lady."

"Reassure yourself, Lise — she will come no more to your room, I am sure of that; what motive would she have to return here?"

"She would come to look for you."

"No, I have told you we don't see each other now, our friendship is broken off; and if she wanted to speak to me she would come to my place, not to yours, to find me."

"Ah, you say that to reassure me; hereafter, I shall no longer dare to go downstairs — fortunately, I do not go down very often; once only, very early in the morning to get my little provisions. It is all the same, M. Casimir, my portrait is finished, you put the last touches yesterday; you must not come to see me again."

"Oh, Lise, I am no longer your friend, then. What! are you not willing to allow me to come and see you?"

"I do not say that; but I do not want this lady to find you here."

"I will be prudent, I know this lady's habits, and then I can watch for her goings out. Rouflard will keep me informed, I can count on him."

"He's a very kind man, that Rouflard, what a pity it is that he should get tipsy; good heavens, it seems to me I hear some one coming up."

"No, it is on the fourth floor; I hear them opening the door."

"M. Casimir, you will take away your easel, won't you? If any one sees it here, they will say, 'He is still going there to paint,' we must not allow them to be able to say that."

"Very well; I will take my easel, but that will not prevent my coming to see you every day; it has grown into a sweet habit for me; I should no longer be able to work during the daytime if I did not see you in the morning — you are not the same — you can't be."

Lise made no reply, but she smiled as she looked at Casimir, and her look was as good as the best of answers. The young painter squeezed her hand and at last decided to carry away his easel.

CHAPTER X

Mademoiselle Proh is Sick. Another Extraordinary Fact

During the whole of this day, Casimir had had a kind of fever, he had remained at home, but he had left his entrance door half open that he might hear what passed on his staircase, and he had heard only young Phonphonse singing to the tune of Dunkirk,—

A great big giraffe,
That rhymes with carafe;
But mandrill will do
To rhyme with cuckoo.

"Who has taught you that infamous rhyme?" said Madame Proh, darting out of her room.

"Why, Rouflard often sings it as he comes down from his den."

"What a monster that drunken Rouflard is! I don't understand how my neighbor, M. Casimir, can employ such a man — and you, Phonphonse, if you sing that again in the house you shall be whipped and put upon dry bread."

"All right, if you give me dry bread I shall tell that you spat out your false teeth yesterday when you sneezed."

"Hold your tongue, you little imp. Good heavens! and they say there are some people who wish to have children."

Casimir only left his room to go to dinner. When he reached the landing on the first floor he passed through very quickly without raising his head. He went to the play in the evening and did not come in till nearly midnight; but he saw that there was still a good deal of light on the first floor. No doubt Madame Montémolly was occupied in settling herself in her new lodging. He took his light from the porter, according to custom, the latter said to him with a mischievous air,—

"No doubt you know now who you have got for a new neighbor?"

"No, M. Chausson, and I assure you it interests me little."

"You will not say that when you learn that I have let the first floor to Madame Montémolly, an intimate friend of monsieur's."

"In the first place, M. Chausson, you make intimate friends of simple acquaintances. Then, we had a slight discussion, that lady and I, and now I do not meet her at all."

"Oh, what a pity! I'll wager it was on some confounded political subject, politics embroil every one; but you'll get reconciled with this lady, who has such beautiful manners."

"Give me my light, and do me the kindness not to revert to this subject."

Casimir hastened up to his room and the porter looked after him, muttering,—

"Oh, so he's broken with this lady; how changeable men are!"

You will tell me — and women also; but that is in the order of nature.

The next morning the young painter went up to Lise's; but he had previously posted Rouflard as a sentinel on the staircase, ordering him to sing the tune of "Lampions" if he should see the lady of the first floor come up. In this fashion, he should manage not to be surprised at his little neighbor's, he would have descended the two flights before Ambroisine could have had time to climb hers.

Lise began to tremble again when she saw Casimir come into the room. But the latter reassured her by telling her of the office he had given Rouflard in regard to the lady on the first floor. Casimir kept telling Lise that Madame Montémolly was nothing to him but a simple acquaintance, a person who wished to protect him; but who abused the ascendancy she had acquired over him — an ascendancy from which, for a long time past, he had resolved to deliver himself. The young girl, who knew nothing of what goes on in the world, believed all her neighbor told her. They talked for a long time, time passes so quickly when people get on well together. Suddenly Lise turned pale, then she exclaimed,—

"Some one is singing."

"Why, that isn't Rouflard, it's that confounded little imp of a Proh."

"Yes, but all the same, I hear a good deal of noise going on in the house — you must go."

"That is Adrienne that you hear, Madame Montémolly's maid; when that girl is anywhere there's nothing to be heard but her."

"She's seen Rouflard on the stairs."

"In the first place, she would have to look up into the air to see him."

"Oh, I am sure that she has been sent there."

"Come, calm yourself, my charming Lise, I'm going; but I'll see you again tomorrow."

"Oh, yes, tomorrow; I'll try to get used to being frightened."

A week passed in this way. Casimir went up to Lise's in the morning, after putting Rouflard on the watch on the staircase. But he had not met Ambroisine, he had not even seen her. However, he was quite sure that she had had some plan in coming to live in this house. He knew that she was too proud to seek a reconciliation with him; but he knew also that she was vindictive and must have formed some project of revenge.

On the ninth day after moving into her new apartment, Ambroisine, towards the middle of the day, mounted the four flights which led to Lise's and suddenly went into the young girl's room. Lise turned pale and trembled at sight of her.

However, the handsome lady had not that terrible expression with which she had shown herself once to Lise; quite otherwise, she now approached her smiling, amiable, gracious, and said to her,—

"Pardon me, mademoiselle, I disturb you perhaps, but for some days past I have been your neighbor, I have taken the first floor. I have learned through Madame Proh that you work on underlinen and such things, and I came to ask if you would consent to work for me?"

Lise was so agitated that she could hardly murmur,—

"Why, madame — but will you not sit down. Pardon me, but I did not quite understand what you said to me."

"Pray resume your place, mademoiselle — do I frighten you?"

"Oh, yes, madame — that is to say, no, madame, not now; but I feared at first —"

"That I had come again to make a scene with M. Casimir? Reassure yourself; the other day I was wrong, I confess it, but I am very excitable and this gentleman had failed to keep his word with me, in regard to my portrait, several times — and that put me in a bad temper. And your portrait is finished, is it?"

"Yes, madame."

"But M. Casimir sometimes comes to see you, doesn't he?"

"Sometimes, madame."

"And he is quite right to do so. You have not answered me, mademoiselle, as to the object of my visit; will you work for me?"

"Oh, certainly, madame, with pleasure."

"Very well. Can you embroider?"

"Yes, madame."

"Well, here are some batiste handkerchiefs, you must embroider my initial there, as it is on this one. Can you do it?"

"Certainly, madame."

"Then I will leave you these six, and the model; but you will do them at your leisure, when you have time, I am not at all in a hurry. As to price, you will fix your own."

"Oh, madame, I shall always be satisfied with what you give me."

"Good-by, mademoiselle, or rather, au revoir; for you will allow me to come sometimes to know if you are thinking of me."

"Whenever you like, madame."

"I shall not frighten you again, I hope?"

"No, madame; on the contrary, I feel that I shall be happy to see you."

These words seemed to surprise Ambroisine, who, however, bowed graciously to the young girl and departed. Lise was quite agitated, but well pleased that the easel was no longer there. The next day she did not fail to inform Casimir of the visit that she had received. The latter was very dissatisfied; he shook his head,—

"Ambroisine," he said in a wondering tone; "Ambroisine wants you to work for her? is amiable, gracious, friendly to you? Hum! that is not natural. Take care, Lise, do not confide in her, for all this hides some perfidy or other."

"Oh, M. Casimir, I think you are wrong, and that you are now unjust to the lady; for my part, I do not mistrust her at all; on the contrary, it is very strange, but, do you know, it seems to me that I am ready to love her."

"Ah, that is because you are trustful, and do not suspect the snares that are held out to you."

"Snares? why that lady has a charming smile — it could hide nothing perfidious."

"It is easy to be seen that you do not know the world."

"Good heavens! it must be a very unprofitable acquaintance if it causes one to distrust everybody."

"Well, are you going to do the work this lady has given you?"

"Of course — these are superb handkerchiefs to embroider — but it will take a long time."

"And you will go to tell her when they are done?"

"Yes. Do I not do so with Madame Proh? Why should I not be as polite to this lady on the first floor?"

Casimir said no more, but he left Lise, very uneasy in his mind as to the visit she had received.

Some days after Mademoiselle Angélina Proh

fell ill; her mother feared lest it should prove to be inflammation of the lungs; her father asserted that it was malarial fever and little Proh declared it was because his sister had eaten too much jam. But indigestion is sometimes very hurtful and may give rise to other illnesses, and whether it was due to jam or not, certain it is that the young girl had a very high fever, a burning thirst, and was sometimes a trifle delirious.

The Prohs had no maid, the former professor asserting that in a house where there were two women it was unnecessary to take a third for the cares of the household, that it would be an unnecessary luxury. There was, therefore, only Madame Proh to care for her daughter; for the papa shut himself up in his dignity, and as little Phonphonse broke everything he touched, they could not utilize him. Young Angélina having been ill enough to need watching at night, Madame Proh was at her wits' ends, and said one morning to her husband,—

"Monsieur, I can't go on like this — if this keeps on I shall be ill myself; here are two nights that I have sat up and I am not made of iron."

"Madame, I never asserted that you were composed of that metal."

"Look here, Castor, why will you not engage a servant? our position will allow of it."

"Our position is very correct as it is; we are four, the perfect square, one more in the house

would derange the equilibrium and the rectitude — no, rectitude is not the word, I should have said, the rectangle."

"Oh, monsieur, you weary me with your squares and your combinations. Do you wish me to be ill?"

"No, madame, for that would necessitate double doses of herb tea and syrup and, consequently, double expense; no, that would not be my desire."

"That, however, is what will happen, if I have to sit up another night with my daughter. Will you sit up with her, monsieur?"

"Me? Why, you know very well, madame, that when bedtime comes it is impossible for me to keep awake; I sleep like a dormouse or a top, if you like that better, although the comparison is rather far-fetched—I should not be of the slightest use."

"Then we must have a nurse."

"A nurse! introduce a stranger into my Lares? for shame! that is stupid, dangerous and bothersome!"

"However, I declare to you that I won't sit up during the coming night. I shall drop with fatigue if I do. Oh, an idea! Little Lise; yes, she is very obliging, she will not refuse to come and assist me a little, and you cannot say she is a stranger—we all know her."

"Little Lise — yes, she lives in the house. You can employ her at a pinch."

"I'll go up to her immediately, for I want to be sure of having some one to sit up tonight with my daughter."

Lise was not much surprised at seeing the lady from the third floor, for she often worked for her. Madame Proh immediately explained the motive of her visit, and the young girl answered,—

"Why, certainly, madame, there is nothing I should like better than to be agreeable to you, but to go to you I should have to leave my grandmother."

"Leave her, my dear, but only during her sleep, when she does not need you. Remember, you need not come down until ten o'clock in the evening, and in the morning at half-past six or seven you can return to her. Besides, your grandmother is a great deal better, isn't she?"

"Yes, madame; thanks to the quinine wine she has been much better for some time past — you are much better, are you not, grandma?"

The old woman raised herself a little in her bed, saying,—

"Yes, my child, yes, I am better; you take such good care of me, and then you gave me a silver spoon and that pleased me. Show it to madame."

"Why, grandmamma, that will not interest madame."

However, to be agreeable to her grandmother, Lise showed Madame Proh the silver spoon, which was quite plain.

"It proves that you are economical," said Celeste, "I compliment you on it."

Then Madame Proh approached the paralytic and said to her,—

"Is it not possible for you to do without your child for one night, that she may come and sit up with mine, who is sick — she need not come down till ten o'clock in the evening, and she will come up again the first thing in the morning; she will be doing me a great service."

"Yes, yes, she can go; you go, Lise, and oblige madame. You know well that once asleep in the evening I have no further need of you, oh, I shall do very well."

"What, grandmother, you are quite willing I should leave you all night?"

"Yes, my daughter; you must oblige madame."

"Well, if you are willing; yes, madame, this evening at ten o'clock I will be with you."

"Thank you, it is very nice of you. Now I must go down as quickly as I can, for I must get the calf's head ready for my husband; well, I'll see you again this evening."

At ten o'clock precisely, when she was sure that her old grandmother was peaceably sleeping, Lise left her room and went down to Madame Proh's. The latter was impatiently expecting her, for she was in great need of sleep. She led her little neighbor into her daughter's sleeping-room and installed her there, saying,—

"Angélina is better today, I think she will pass a good night; in any event, on this table you will find everything necessary: the herb tea on the spirit lamp; sugar for the tea — a small spoon to stir it, and a great spoon with which to give her the syrup you will see in that bottle; but that you will only give her if she is restless and cannot sleep; you quite understand, don't you?"

"Yes, madame, oh, all that is very easy."

"If any accident should happen you will waken me, I sleep in the room at the side, but I hope that nothing will happen. Here is a big armchair in which you will be comfortable — and some books — do you like to read?"

"Oh, very much, madame."

"Then here is a novel which will captivate you; it is filled with crimes, assassinations, hangings, tortures — it's very amusing; Angélina has read it twice already. It is since that time that she has had delirium. But I am going to bed, for I am quite sleepy. My men are sleeping like tops already — I shall go and do the same; my daughter is asleep, I need not tell you not to awaken her."

"Don't be uneasy, madame."

"Don't forget my instructions; a great spoonful of syrup if she is restless only."

"Yes, madame."

Madame Proh departed. Lise, who had not failed to carry her work, sat down to her embroid-

ery. After a time the invalid asked for something to drink and Lise hastened to give her a cup of herb tea. Angélina recognized Lise and said to her,—

"Oh, you are sitting up with me; yes, mamma told me you were going to."

"How do you feel, mademoiselle?"

"Much better."

"Will you have a spoonful of syrup?"

"No, it is not worth while; I feel that I am going to sleep, thank you."

Very soon, in fact, Mademoiselle Proh went to sleep again. Lise went back to her embroidery, but that kind of work tires the eyes. She left it for a moment and yielded to the desire to look at the novel which Madame Proh had praised so highly. She settled herself in an armchair; but after a while, whether it was because she was tired, or whether it was the effect of the novel, Lise slept profoundly.

It was six o'clock in the morning when Madame Proh came into her daughter's room, and Lise was still rubbing her eyes.

"Well, what sort of a night did you have?" demanded Celeste, "our invalid is still sleeping, and that is a good sign."

"The night has been very quiet, madame, your daughter has only asked for a drink once."

"Very good! then she did not take the syrup?"

"No, madame."

"Wonderful! Decidedly, Angélina is on the way to convalescence."

"Madame, since you are up, you will allow me to return to my grandmother at once, will you not?"

"Yes, certainly, my dear; we will settle later on about the price of your watching."

"Don't mention that, madame — I am only too happy to make myself useful to you."

And the young nurse, who was in great haste to get upstairs, was already in the hall when Madame Proh's voice recalled her.

"Lise! Lise!"

"What is it, madame?"

"Where have you put the big spoon for the syrup? I don't find it."

"The big spoon — why, it must be in the same place, madame; for I had no need of it, did not use it."

"You did not use it! however, it is not on the table — look yourself."

Lise looked on the table, then under it, then under all the furniture, Madame Proh did the same but they did not find the large spoon.

"It is very singular," said Lise.

"It is more than singular," cried Celeste, whose face had assumed a severe expression. "In fact, mademoiselle, you know well that I left two silver spoons on this table, one small and one large. Here is the little one, where is the large one? I

must have it! I must have it! I must have it! Nobody but you has come in here, so you will have to answer for it, and you were going off so quickly!"

"My God, madame, can you believe that I would carry away your spoon — ah, search me, madame, look everywhere — in my pockets, in my dress — oh, good God! to suspect me of stealing!"

"I don't say that, little one, but sometimes through carelessness — without paying any attention to it — "

"Oh, look, madame, I entreat you, search me!"

Madame Proh hastened to introduce herself to Lise's pockets, she felt her all over and performed auscultations, as if she were a surgeon, she even examined her shoes, although the young girl had such a tiny foot that her shoe would barely contain a small spoon. This severe inspection proved to the professor's wife that Lise was not carrying away the spoon.

"Well, madame, are you persuaded now that I am carrying away nothing?" asked Lise.

"Certainly, I see well that it is not on you; but, then, what have you done with it. Let me see, perhaps you threw some water out of the window, and have thrown out the spoon with it."

"No, madame, I have thrown nothing out of the window."

"Or in the sink?"

"I have not left this room, madame; I have not even been on the landing."

"On the landing — indeed, you could not go there, for I always triple lock the door, there is a secret lock; I am the only one who can open that."

"Then, madame, you are quite sure that I have not left your apartment during the night while you were asleep."

"Good God! I don't say to the contrary; but all that does not give me back my spoon."

"It will be found, madame; it will be found at the moment you least expect it."

"But where the mischief have you hidden it."

"Why do you insinuate that I have hidden it, madame? what should I want to do that for? what motive could I have? I will return to my grandmother, madame, who must be wide awake by this time. You are quite sure, are you not, madame, that I am not carrying anything away with me?"

"I am sure it is not on you, but what the devil have you done with it?"

"Good heavens, madame, if I must pay you the value of it, I will — I can manage to do so by working hard; but, please, do not mention it to my grandmother, for it will make her worse."

"Very well, mademoiselle, very well, I will see what M. Proh says."

Lise went up to her room very sadly, with her eyes full of tears.

"Suspected of being a thief," she said to herself,

"this is frightful. M. Casimir was quite right in saying to me, 'Distrust every one.' However, this lady cannot wish to cause me any trouble; but what can have become of this unlucky spoon."

Madame Proh did not fail to relate this misadventure to her husband, and the professor shouted,—

"Never introduce strangers into your Lares. I warned you against it, madame; we are done out of a spoon and it is your fault."

"But, monsieur, little Lise is not a stranger; besides, I am well assured that she has not carried away our spoon."

"Then, madame, the spoon must have taken itself off without assistance."

"Monsieur, I searched the little thing most carefully and the object was not upon her person."

"You thought so, but thieves have means of disposing of things which are very mysterious. Ask robbers where they hide the diamonds they steal."

"Monsieur, a large spoon is not swallowed like a diamond — nor a little one either, for the matter of that."

"There are people, madame, who can do anything."

The story of the lost silver spoon was soon known throughout the house and was the subject of much conversation. Mademoiselle Adrienne, who heard it from the porter, did not fail to go and report the matter to her mistress, who listened

very attentively but without making the slightest remark.

"Madame has given work to this young girl," said Adrienne, "and when she comes again to bring her work home, I shall be careful to have an eye on her that she takes nothing from here."

"When she comes here," said Ambroisine, "you will stay in your room until you are called — remember that."

Mademoiselle Adrienne departed grumbling. The porter had looked all about the courtyard and examined the waters which drained from the sinks; he was positive the young girl from the fifth floor was not guilty. Little Phonphonse sang on the staircase,—

We have missed a silver spoon
Since Lise nursed my sister.

And Rouflard, who heard that, took the little boy by the slack of his trousers and held him suspended in the air, saying to him,—

"I wager that it was you, little rascal, who played the trick; you took the spoon that you might drink some syrup."

"That isn't true, I sleep with papa — I don't get up at night, I don't; it's good for you."

"Will you hold your tongue, you frog?"

The child's shouts brought the Proh couple, as well as the young painter. On hearing the reports against Lise, Casimir was furious. He said to Madame Proh,—

"I hope, madame, that you do not suspect Lise of taking the missing piece of silverware."

"I don't say she has taken it, monsieur, but I do say she has lost it, and it is all very annoying."

"Madame, I will be security for this young girl, and you shall lose nothing by what has happened."

"And I," cried Rouflard, "repeat that little Lise is incapable of committing a bad action! She is a model of probity as well as of virtue and kindness. She who works without relaxation to earn a living for an old paralytic should not for one instant be suspected."

"But it seems the old goody has a great love for silver spoons," resumed Madame Proh, "for she showed me one her Lise had bought her."

"Which proves she had no need of yours."

"An abundance of good things is by no means to be despised," said the professor.

"That is a reflection quite worthy of M. Prorata."

The Proh couple went into their apartments angrily, and Casimir hastened up to Lise. He found her with eyes reddened with tears; she put a finger on her lips and pointed to her grandmother. Casimir understood that she had hidden the adventure of the spoon from the old woman; he seated himself beside the young girl and took her hand as he said very low,—

"So you are still troubled, Lise, you who deserve to be so happy."

"M. Casimir, you know the story of the spoon,

no doubt; I heard the little boy singing about it on the stairs from here."

"Yes, I know something of it."

"But you don't believe that I would take a silver spoon from Madame Proh, do you?"

"Can you ask me such a thing? do I not know your worth? Oh, I render you justice—your soul is as pure as your looks."

"And Madame Montémolly — have you seen her? do you know what she thinks of it?"

"I have not seen that lady; I have never met her, but she must think as all the other tenants will, that there is some malice beneath all this, or at least, some mischief of the little boy."

"No, he did not come into the room."

"Did you not sleep at all during the night?"

"Oh, yes, I slept for a long time."

"Well, while you were asleep, someone might have come in and taken the spoon; be easy, before long they'll find it, I wager."

Six days passed and the Prohs had not found their spoon. But Ambroisine was caring for her friend Florentine's little girl, while the latter went to take some sea bathing. The child was a very nice girl of eight; but the measles, accompanied with much fever, came out on little Adeline. Mademoiselle Adrienne, who was very much afraid of catching the measles, was extremely reluctant to go near the little girl's bed.

So, one morning early, Ambroisine went up to

Lise's, who trembled at first on seeing her, but was reassured by the beautiful lady's smile; the latter said to her,—

"Mademoiselle, I come to ask a service, I have a little girl at my house, the child of one of my best friends, whose mother entrusted her to me while she is travelling. She has come out with the measles and is very feverish; my servant is afraid of the disease, and does not help take care of her enough. Well, you would oblige me very much if you would come and sit up with the child tonight. As you were kind enough to do this for Madame Proh, I thought that you would not refuse to do as much for me."

"Yes, madame," answered Lise, smiling, "yes, I passed the night beside Madame Proh's daughter but, you can imagine how much mortification it caused me, a silver spoon disappeared that night and has not been found. Madame Proh knows I did not take it away with me — and yet, who knows but what some people suspect me?"

"The step I am taking, mademoiselle, should, at any rate, prove to you that I am not one of those people; on the other hand, in asking you to come and watch at night with me, I thought that would put an end to all this gossip. You cannot refuse me."

"Why, madame?"

"I don't ask you to come at ten o'clock in the evening; come down a little before midnight, I go

to bed late, and you can go home early. You see, your grandmother will hardly have time to notice your absence. You consent, do you not?"

"Madame, I dare not refuse you; however, it will cost me much to do so; I had so much mortification from my night at Madame Proh's."

"That is all childishness; at my place you have nothing to dread. Well, this evening then, at midnight or sooner if you wish."

"No, I would rather come late."

"Very well — that is understood. I shall wait up for you, for I want to settle you myself with my little invalid."

Ambroisine had gone. Lise was eager to see Casimir to tell him of this new contrariety; and the young painter did not keep her long waiting. On learning what Madame Montémolly had asked of Lise, he was quite surprised and seemed sorry that she had accepted.

"Have I done wrong in consenting to go and sit up at that lady's?" asked the young girl.

"You could hardly refuse her, as you had already done the same for Madame Proh."

"And then this lady is now very kind to me; you see she doesn't believe the wicked gossip about this lost spoon."

"I see that what this lady has done shows that she renders you justice; but I hardly think she wishes you well."

"Why not?"

" Because — well, go tonight and watch little Adeline; but tomorrow, early in the morning, I shall watch for your return."

It wanted but a few minutes of midnight when Lise rang the bell of the first floor. It was the buxom Adrienne who opened the door to the little seamstress and conducted the latter to her mistress' presence. The lady received the young girl with a smile which was not quite frank, though she tried to make it appear so. She at once led Lise into a pretty room where the little invalid was sleeping, saying as she did so,—

" I have put Adeline into the room that I keep for her mother when she is living in the country, and comes occasionally to Paris. I think you will be very comfortable here; you can go out by this passage without waking anyone."

" Oh, madame, I shall not want to go out tonight — what should I go out for? "

" Here is a sofa where you may rest and even sleep a bit if the little one is quiet. Here are some books, and will you have some supper? "

" No, madame, thank you, I never take supper."

" In any case, if you are hungry — here are some cakes, biscuits and wine. This is the herb tea for the little one, and in this phial is a soothing potion; how is this, that idiot of an Adrienne hasn't put a spoon. Adrienne! Adrienne! "

The maid came running and rubbing her eyes.

" Adrienne, bring a large spoon and some small

ones — if mademoiselle wishes to sweeten some wine she cannot use that which serves for the tea."

The servant went out and came back presently with a great spoon and two small ones, which she placed on the night stand, saying,—

"That makes one big spoon and three little ones, for there was one here before."

"That's all right, Adrienne, that's all right; no one is asking you to count them."

"But I wanted to let madame see."

"Go to bed."

"Oh, I ask nothing better."

"Now, Mademoiselle Lise, I'm going to bed also — you have everything that is necessary? there is nothing you wish for?"

"No, madame, thank you."

"When the little one wakes up, you must give her something to drink; then, if she coughs, some of the soothing mixture."

"You may rely on me, madame."

"Good evening, I shall see you tomorrow morning. I shall come early to inquire for my little Adeline."

Lise was alone. She looked around the room admiringly; the furnishings were fresh and in delightfully good taste. "How happy she must be to live in such a pretty apartment," she said to herself; "but, after all, one might perhaps be just as ill there as anywhere else, and have as many sorrows as in a humble room up in the roof. Here

are books, but I shall not read them; I have brought my needlework, and I shall do some of that."

Lise set to work at her embroidery. Presently little Adeline awoke and she gave her some of the tea to drink; a little later the child coughed, she gave her a large spoonful of her medicine. A part of the night passed thus. About three o'clock sleep overcame Lise, who tried in vain to resist it, but her need of it was imperious and she could not overcome it. But as the invalid slept peacefully the nurse was not long before she did the same.

Towards seven o'clock in the morning Lise awoke, and almost at the same instant a door opened and Madame Montémolly appeared, wrapped in a handsome dressing-gown. She approached the bed, saying,—

"Well, and how is the little one? has she had a good night, mademoiselle?"

"Yes, madame, very good, she coughed a very little and then she slept well; I went to sleep myself towards morning."

"That was all right so long as the child wanted nothing. Ah, here she is, waking up. Good morning, Adeline, how do you feel this morning?"

The little girl answered that she felt better, but she began to cough; Ambroisine exclaimed,—

"Give me a spoonful of her medicine, that I may make her take it, that will quiet this cough."

Lise ran to the table on which the phial and the big spoon had been placed.

"Come, mademoiselle, give me the medicine," resumed Ambroisine, "don't you hear the child coughing?"

"Yes, madame, yes — but — I can't find the large spoon."

"You must have put it somewhere else. Look about."

"Good heavens! what can I have done with it, madame? Why, I can't understand it. I don't see it at all."

"Well, you are quite sure you had one here, are you not?"

"Certainly, madame, I used it twice during the night."

"Then, you haven't half looked for it. Adrienne! Adrienne! she's capable of being still asleep; Adrienne!"

The maid came at length, rubbing her eyes.

"What do you want, madame?"

"Mademoiselle can't find the large spoon which was here yesterday."

"I remember well there was a large one and three small."

"Here are the three small ones," said Lise, "but I can't understand why the large one is not there also."

"Hang it!" cried Adrienne, "a pretty state of things! it must have gone to join Madame Proh's."

"Oh, mademoiselle, what you say is shameful! Madame, do you also think that I have your spoon?"

"What would you have me say, mademoiselle, when facts speak for themselves. One is obliged to yield to evidence; you admit yourself that you had a silver spoon here."

"Yes, madame, yes, I do admit it; I repeat to you that I used it to give the little one her medicine last night."

"Well, you remained alone here all night, and this morning the object has disappeared. Who, then, could have taken it, if not you?"

"Oh, madame, pray search me; you will see that I have not got it."

"It is useless, mademoiselle, when a person takes anything she does not keep it on her."

"All the same," cried Adrienne, "I'm going to search her; because I don't wish the silverware to be lost where I am in service."

The maid ran through Lise's pockets and turned them inside out, then she felt the young girl from head to foot and finished her inspection by exclaiming,—

"Nothing! I'll answer for it she hasn't a spoon about her."

"There, madame, you see," said Lise.

"I see that you haven't it about you; but if it can't be found it must be because you have carried it elsewhere."

"But where could I have carried it, since I did not once leave the room."

"Who will prove that to me, mademoiselle? one

may go out by this passage without awakening any one."

"Oh, madame, it is horrible for you to think that. My God! My God! I am indeed unfortunate!"

Lise burst into sobs. Adrienne went down on her hands and knees to look under all the furniture; but search as they would the spoon was not to be found. Ambroisine drew near poor Lise, who was quite overcome with grief, and said to her,—

"Don't be afraid, mademoiselle, I shall not follow this affair up as another would perhaps do — go, I will keep you no longer. I shall merely take it upon myself to mention to M. Casimir that he is not very fortunate in his choice of new acquaintances."

Lise listened no further, nor did she delay leaving that room which she had thought so pretty the evening before. She could hardly move her trembling limbs, and tottered to the stairs. But at the top of the first flight she met Casimir, who was awaiting her and exclaimed, on seeing her all in tears,—

"What has happened? what is the matter with you? What have they done to you to make you cry thus?" Lise told Casimir all that had happened, recounted Ambroisine's words, who had told her that she could have gone out without awakening any one.

"Why, then," said Casimir, "they might also come in to where you were, without being heard. Did you sleep last night?"

"Alas, yes, about three o'clock in the morning I could not resist my sleepiness, it was stronger than I."

"Oh, how unfortunate, for while you were sleeping some one may have come into the room."

"I don't think so, they would have awakened me."

"It does not show common sense to believe that you have taken that spoon after what had already happened at Madame Proh's — and which has caused you so much mortification."

"That is exactly why they accuse me again — the lady's servant said, 'The spoon has gone to join Madame Proh's.'"

"It's shameful! But calm yourself, Lise, there is, beneath all this, a mystery which I will manage to discover; I shall take no rest until your innocence is fully recognized."

The young painter managed to calm Lise's grief a little; he accompanied her up to her own door and there left her, promising again that he would render her justice. But Casimir promised that which he himself did not know how to perform, for he racked his brain in vain to guess how the silver spoons could have disappeared from the rooms where Lise had passed the night.

After going into his own room for a moment,

Casimir again left it, for he had decided to go to Ambroisine's to know if she really believed the young girl to be guilty. But the adventure of the night had already become known in the house, for Adrienne's first care had been to go and tell the porter that little Lise had given at her mistress' a second representation of the night at Madame Proh's; Chausson, who felt very well disposed toward his tenant of the fifth floor, was extremely sorry at being obliged to believe her guilty; but Rouflard, who had listened to Ambroisine's servant, said to her,—

"You are a slanderous-tongued idiot; one would have to be an imbecile to suppose that a young girl who wished to commit a theft would do exactly the same thing over again two stories lower down."

"Well, then, where is the spoon?"

"Who knows? under your petticoats, perhaps."

"You insult me, monsieur, I am an honest girl, everybody knows it and I pride myself on it."

"One who is honest does not pride one's self on it — it is only one's duty to be so."

"Oh, it's all very well for you to talk, you, who drink the rum you are sent to buy. Oh, I know the history of that well enough — the porter has told me all about your doings."

"Did he also tell you about his own when he was my domestic?"

"You have a domestic — you? Ah, that's a good bit of humbug!"

"It matters little whether you believe it or not, it is not a question of me, it is little Lise whom I forbid you to accuse of theft."

"You forbid me! Well, I don't care a straw for all your forbiddings—Yes, little Lise has stolen a spoon, two spoons even."

Adrienne shouted this with all her might, Rouflard was furious. At the noise which was being made on the first-floor landing, nearly all the tenants came out of their doors and Casimir arrived there just as Ambroisine also came out of her room to order her maid to be silent.

CHAPTER XI

What It Really Was

"And you, madame, do you also believe that this young girl has robbed you of the piece of silverware which you miss?" said Casimir, stopping in front of Ambroisine.

Ambroisine tried to dominate the impression caused by the sight of Casimir, whom she had not met since the scene which had led to the severing of their connection, and, in a slightly ironical tone, she answered him,—

"Really, monsieur, I am sorry for what has happened, above all on your account; I regret that it is your protégé — the one to whom you have sacrificed an old friendship, who has shown herself capable of so blamable an action, but it is just as well you should know her for what she is, for you cannot deny —"

"But this young girl has always been a model of virtue, of good conduct. You know how she works that her old paralytic shall lack for nothing."

"You may say all you like, monsieur, but that will not bring back my spoon."

"Some one might have entered your place while Lise was sleeping, for she did sleep."

"Who would do that — robbers? Why, the porter knows perfectly well who comes into the house; and you do not suppose, I presume, that some one of my household went into the room where Lise was watching by Adeline? She slept, you say, she told you so; but who is to prove it?"

"Why, besides," exclaimed Madame Proh, who had come down from the third floor to mingle in the conversation, "no one can say that in my house anyone could come in to get to the nurse; then there is something in all this which helps to condemn Lise; it is the love, the passion of the old grandmother for silver spoons — the little girl bought one lately, which she eagerly showed me. It is probable that the old woman may have wished to have others."

"Madame, you are calumniating honest people — I shall not allow it."

"I am not calumniating, I am only telling the facts; it is easy to say, 'She is innocent; she is innocent.' Then, monsieur, where are our spoons?"

A lady who lived above Ambroisine, a lady of fifty, very distinguished looking, with cold and rather formal manners, who never spoke to any one in the house, but who, attracted by the noise which had been made on the stairs, had heard all that had been said on the first-floor landing, now came down, and said to Casimir,—

"Monsieur, you do not think little Lise guilty, nor do I; but there is something mysterious in all

this which it concerns us to discover; I have an idea that I shall manage to do so."

"Oh, madame, you will restore poor Lise to life, for she will die of grief if her innocence is not recognized. But tell us, what are you thinking of doing?"

"Well, in the first place, monsieur, it is necessary that this young girl should consent to pass the night with me; I shall tell her that my sister, who lives with me, is ill, and that she must come and watch her."

"Oh, madame, Lise will not do it; after what has twice happened, how can you suppose that she would again consent to nurse anyone?"

"She will do it, monsieur, if you will take it upon you to entreat her to do so; and if you tell her that it is in the certainty of clearing her innocence, that we ask of her this last sacrifice of a night's rest."

"Oh, if that is the idea, madame — yes, I will induce her to sit up for you."

"Well, then, monsieur, you will send her to me at midnight. I shall ask these two ladies if they will kindly come to my apartments also, a little before that time."

"What for?" said Madame Proh.

"To be witnesses as to what passes; and, as I hope, to prove the innocence of little Lise."

"Oh, madame, it is impossible for me to sit up, it gives me cramps."

"But I shall not fail to be there, madame," said Ambroisine, "before midnight I shall have the honor of seeing you."

"Very well, with M. Casimir and myself, that will be quite sufficient. Monsieur, will you kindly come and tell me during the day if Lise will consent to sit up with me?"

"I will go up immediately, madame, and will let you know presently."

"Very well. Good-day to you, ladies."

Madame Dermont, for that was the name of the lady on the second floor, went gravely back to her apartments, leaving the other tenants to make their commentaries.

"I do not at all think that this lady will discover the mystery," said Madame Proh.

"She'll be a spoon out too," muttered Adrienne.

Madame Montémolly ordered her maid to be silent and went into her house.

"That's a lady to be respected," cried Rouflard, looking up towards the second story, "she doesn't gossip, or listen to idle tales. She says to herself, 'This little girl did not take those spoons, but there is some mystery there which must be discovered.'"

"And how is she going to do that?" inquired the porter.

"That, Chausson, is beyond your comprehension."

"And beyond yours also."

"You forget yourself, my old valet!"

"There are no valets here, I am the porter."

"Then you had better sweep the court."

Casimir did not lose an instant; he went up to Lise, whom he found as sad as when he left her.

"I have good news to tell you," said he. "Madame Dermont, that lady who lives on the second floor, is interested in you and has no doubt of your innocence."

"I thank her for that; indeed, that lady has always looked at me kindly."

"But that is not all, she wishes that the truth should be known and that we shall discover what has become of the two lost spoons."

"How happy I should be if she could manage that — it is life — it is honor that she would restore to me. And how can she do it?"

"By Jove! it will seem singular to you, but it is necessary that you should consent to go tonight and sit up with her sister, who is sick."

"She wants me to sit up again; to pass the night away from my grandmother? Oh, no, no; you know very well that it only brought misfortune upon me before."

"But this time, Lise, it is different; it is to justify yourself that you are asked to do this. What can you fear? This lady is interested in you; yield to her desire, I beg of you. I have confidence in Madame Dermont; she will penetrate the mystery which enshrouds these inexplicable nights."

"You wish me to; well, I will do as you wish;

but at this lady's I shall be very careful not to go to sleep."

"Yes, that is right; in that way you will see all that goes on. At midnight I'll come for you and take you to this lady's."

"Need you take so much trouble?"

"Oh, Lise; in aught that concerns your happiness, your reputation, do you think anyone is more interested than I? Then, it is understood that at midnight you will be ready."

"Oh, yes, grandmama sleeps, then."

"I will come up for you."

And Casimir, on leaving Lise, went immediately to the lady of the second floor.

"Lise has consented," he said to her, "at midnight I will bring her to you."

"Very well."

"She has made a firm promise to herself that she will not go to sleep, and I advised her to keep awake, also; so that she may see if anyone comes near her in the night."

"Oh, you were wrong, monsieur; Lise must go to sleep, on the contrary — she must! it is that I am counting on."

"I don't understand you, madame."

"You will understand me tonight; now I shall go and prepare a slightly soporific drink, and you yourself must beg the young girl to take it, telling her it will tend to keep her awake."

"Why, madame?"

"Monsieur, if Lise does not sleep we shall know nothing, and the experiment will be fruitless."

"I will obey you, madame, for I have perfect confidence in you."

"I sincerely hope you will not repent it. Come, monsieur, follow me, I am going to take you to the room where Lise will watch; it is the one in which my sister sleeps. She is not ill at all, but will pretend to be so and during the night will ask for something to drink two or three times, when the nurse is not asleep."

Madame Dermont took the young man into a very handsome sleeping-room which had two doors; one, which was glazed, opened into another room; there the glass was only covered with a light muslin curtain. The lady led Casimir into the further room, and said to him,—

"Do you not think, monsieur, that from behind this glass we may see all that is done in the room where Lise is?"

"Yes, madame, nothing is easier; the curtain being on this side can be easily drawn aside."

"And we shall be better enabled to do it from the manner in which my sister's room will be lighted; this glass door will be completely in obscurity. Well, monsieur, it is here, behind this glass door, and without the young girl knowing it, that we shall pass the night — yourself, the lady on the first floor, and myself; do you not think that we can thus see all that Lise does?"

"Certainly, madame, but — I don't understand."

"Wait, monsieur, wait; tonight I hope you will fully comprehend. You will bring Lise and pretend to return to your rooms; but you will come back here by the other side; you will remember the way, will you not?"

"Rest assured, madame, that I shall forget nothing."

"Good-by, till tonight."

Casimir left the lady and racked his head to guess what she hoped. He met Rouflard and imparted his uneasiness to him. The old-time beau shook his head.

"I don't understand it any more than you do," he admitted; "but, at any rate, I promise you that I will pass the night on the staircase opposite this lady's door, and that if any spoon thief attempts to get in I will begin by knocking him down."

On the stroke of twelve Casimir was at his little neighbor's. He found her trembling and sad, but quite ready to follow him, for her old grandmother was asleep. She hastily snatched up her work and, without speaking, took the arm that Casimir offered to her. They thus descended several stairs.

"You are trembling," said her conductor, "are you cold?"

"No, on the contrary, I am very warm; but I am trembling because I have a presentiment of some other misfortune."

"On the contrary, an end will be put to all your grief and vexation; come, pluck up your courage! this lady wishes that your innocence shall be cleared in the sight of everybody."

"And how will she accomplish that?"

"That is her secret; have confidence in her."

They reached the second floor. Madame Dermont herself came to meet the young people, whom she led into the room, where her sister had been in bed for some time.

"This is where you will watch," she said to Lise; "take a cup of tea, it will do you good and keep you awake."

"Thank you, madame, I need nothing."

"Lise," said Casimir, 'take what madame offers, I beg of you; it will soothe you."

"If you wish it."

And the young girl drank the contents of the cup he offered her.

"Now, good-night," said Casimir, "I'll go up to my rooms. I shall see you tomorrow."

"Yes — tomorrow."

The young painter departed. Madame Dermont said to Lise,—

"My child, this is all you will have to do: Give my sister some of the herb tea when she asks for something to drink, and a great spoonful of the syrup when she coughs."

"A large spoon — another of them! But can't I do without that, madame?"

"No, it is indispensable. Now, do you need anything more?"

"No, madame, nothing at all."

"In that case I will leave you; my sister seems less oppressed this evening, I believe she will give you little to do. Here is a large easy chair in which you can rest easily. For, if my sister sleeps, you may as well sleep a little also."

"Oh, no, madame, I will not; I shall keep awake all the time."

"Good-night, my child, till tomorrow."

Madame Dermont left Lise, who established herself on a chair and took up her work.

"Oh, no," she said to herself, "I shall not go to sleep, for some one to have a chance to come and take away the spoon. Ah, if I had always kept awake that would not have happened; but tonight I shall resist slumber; besides this lamp gives a perfect light, I can embroider."

However, Casimir had gone into the room with the glass door which had been pointed out to him. It was barely lighted with a nightlight. He found Ambroisine there, she being seated against the glass door; he exchanged a cold bow with her and said,—

"I thank you, madame, for not having failed to keep this appointment, at which you are to receive the proof of Lise's innocence."

"I desire it, monsieur, for I am less spiteful than you think; but, I confess to you, I strongly doubt whether they will succeed in establishing it."

The arrival of Madame Dermont put an end to this conversation. She placed the nightlight as far as possible from the glass door, saying,—

"In this way it is impossible that they should see the light here from my sister's room, while we ourselves, through this thin curtain, can see everything that goes on. Wait, madame, will you look in?"

Ambroisine put her head against the glass and murmured,—

"Yes, I can see, for the room is well lighted; the young girl is working."

"Yes, and now we must have patience, we must wait till she goes to sleep."

"But if she does not go to sleep?"

"She is sure to go; thanks to a slight narcotic that I put into the cup of tea I made her take, which I think was necessary, for she had fully made up her mind not to go to sleep. But this beverage will perhaps not take effect for two or three hours; so if you would like to rest till then, madame, will you lie down on this sofa?"

"No, madame, thank you, I have not the slightest desire to sleep, for I am too curious to know what you expect to do."

This conversation had been conducted in a low tone, which added to the mystery in which the night was involved. These three persons assembled there, remained seated and kept silence, lending ear to what passed in Lise's room. The sister,

who had been told what to do, asked for something to drink; the young girl hastened to give it to her. Later on she offered some syrup, which was accepted by the invalid. Lise carefully put the large spoon on the table and resumed her seat. The pretended invalid really went to sleep, and the young girl took up her work again.

An hour passed thus; then another. Casimir's anxiety increased; Ambroisine did not breathe a word nor close an eye. Madame Dermont constantly watched through the glass door, muttering,—

"Good heavens! she doesn't seem as though she were going to sleep; perhaps she is going to overcome the effects of the narcotic."

Some moments, which seemed to be centuries passed; at length Madame Dermont exclaimed,—

"Ah, she struggles in vain—her work has fallen from her hands; she is going to sleep."

"Yes, yes, she is going to sleep," said Casimir; "see, her head has fallen back. Oh, she has indeed gone to sleep."

"And now," said Ambroisine who was looking also, "what is going to happen?"

"Wait, madame, until her sleep is sounder; now, we may raise this curtain altogether without fear of being seen."

The curtain was raised. The three persons kept their gaze fixed on Lise; in a short time she seemed agitated, her sleep appeared painful.

"By Jove! she looks as if she was greatly op-

pressed," said Casimir, "she must be having a bad dream."

"Oh, she is waking, for she rises and opens her eyes," said Ambroisine.

"Silence, madame, silence," said Madame Dermont, "she is still asleep. Don't you see that she is a somnambulist?"

"A somnambulist?"

"Hush! listen; she is speaking."

Lise who was still asleep, although her eyes were wide open, left her chair, saying,—

"Yes, good mamma, yes — I'm going to lock up your silver spoon — you are so fond of it and you are so afraid it will be stolen. But I shall hide it well — always in the same place, between your mattresses, you know."

And immediately Lise took the spoon and falling on her knees beside the bed thrust it between the hair and the straw mattresses; then she rose, saying,—

"Oh, it is well hidden, no one can find it there; do not be afraid about it again, grandmamma."

Lise returned to her place, reseated herself and closed her eyes. The three persons at the glass door had seen everything that had passed. Casimir was transported with joy.

"Justified!" cried he, "she is justified, for the other spoons must be in the same place. That is so, is it not, madame?"

"Certainly," answered Madame Dermont, "this

young girl is a somnambulist, just as I had imagined; that was what I wanted to let you see; come, we can go into her room, she will not wake up now."

"A somnambulist," said Ambroisine, who had hardly recovered from her astonishment; "I am very curious to examine her closely."

The glass door was open, they went into the bedroom. Lise was in the easy chair with her head lying back and in the excitement of her dream she had entirely thrown aside the fichu which had covered her neck, and the little locket could be plainly seen which, suspended by a black ribbon, she always wore hidden under her dress.

Madame Montémolly, who was still doubtful as to Lise's being asleep approached her and looked at it attentively.

"Come, madame, come," said Casimir to her; "come to your place. Your spoon must be hidden in just the same way under your little invalid's bed; you must yourself have proof of Lise's innocence."

But Ambroisine seemed struck with astonishment as she perceived the locket that was hung at the young girl's neck; this locket was singular in shape, enamelled all around and artistically wrought, she could not take her eyes from it, and barely answered Casimir,—

"Go, monsieur, go with madame; you do not need me, my maid is watching with a light — besides, here is my key."

"But why will you not come with us?"

"Because — something of greater importance detains me near Lise; you will learn presently what that is — go."

Casimir did not insist, he was eager to go in search of the other spoon; Madame Dermont was not less so than he, for she was proud of having been successful in discovering the mystery which had enveloped Lise's actions. On the staircase they found Rouflard, who had been placed there on sentinel duty.

"Justified," said Casimir, directly he saw him; "she is a somnambulist and, dreaming during her sleep of her grandmother's spoon, she hid the one that was beside her under the mattress of the bed; we are going to look in the same place for the one she hid at Madame Montémolly's."

"Please let me go with you," cried Rouflard. "I should like to see the face that drab of a maid makes."

"Come along, then, Rouflard."

When they went in they found Mademoiselle Adrienne, who was asleep in the drawing-room instead of at her post watching the child, but Casimir awoke her, saying,—

"Come with us, mademoiselle, lead us to the room where Lise passed yesterday night; we are going to find the lost object there."

"The spoon? ah, that's pretty strong, that is; then I've searched uselessly everywhere!"

But without listening to the servant they went into the pretty chamber where the little girl was sleeping. There Casimir ran to the bed, felt between the mattresses and soon uttered an exclamation of delight as he drew out the spoon and showed it to everybody.

Rouflard was overwhelmed with joy and said to Adrienne,—

"Well, now, evil-tongued girl, it seems that you did not look everywhere according to that."

"Good Lord! who would suspect that anyone would put a silver spoon in such a place as that — what did she put it there for?"

"Somnambulists do many very surprising things."

"Somnambulists?"

"Yes, that is the whole secret. Ah, so much the worse. I am going up to the Prohs' to tell them where their spoon is."

"But they are asleep, Rouflard."

"One reason the more why I should go, my artist; that will have more effect upon them; I wish that the justification of my good angel should make as much commotion as the calumnies with which they overwhelmed her."

CHAPTER XII

Another Discovery

When Casimir and Madame Dermont returned to Ambroisine, they found her still beside Lise, who had not awakened, devouring with her eyes the medallion attached to the young girl's neck, but not daring to touch it for fear of awakening her from the light slumber into which she had been plunged by the narcotic they had made her take.

"Madame, madame, here is your spoon," cried Casimir, showing the piece of silverware; "it was hidden like the other. Thanks to you, madame, the poor little thing is fully justified."

"Yes, monsieur, yes; I had no doubt of it — but something that I cannot understand keeps me near Lise. This locket that she wears is quite similar to that which I fastened to my daughter's neck; mine opened, and on the inside I had engraved two letters, A and G, which were the initials of mine and her father's names. I am dying to know if this locket opens — but I dare not take it, for fear of re-awakening this little one."

"Oh, there is no danger of that," said Madame Dermont, "her sleep is sound enough now. Wait! I will raise her, or, we had better untie this ribbon."

The lady of the second floor did the thing very easily ; she untied the ribbon, and took the locket, which she presented to Ambroisine ; the latter took it in a trembling hand, she sought, found the spring ; the locket opened. Ambroisine uttered a loud cry ; she had recognized the two letters and showed them to those who surrounded her, saying to them,—

" Here ! look, an A and a G ; it is indeed the locket that I tied to my daughter's neck when I sent her to her nurse. How did it come on this little girl's neck ? "

The exclamation uttered by Ambroisine had, however, awakened Lise ; she opened her eyes, she looked at those who surrounded her, and murmured,—

" Good heavens ! what can I have done now ? "

" Fear nothing, my child," said Madame Dermont, " your innocence is established ; everything will be explained to you."

" But just now," said Ambroisine, " will you answer me, this locket that was at your neck and that I took the liberty of examining closely — where did you get it ? who gave it you ? "

" Where did I get it ? why, I have always had it ; my mother had tied it to my neck when she carried me to my nurse's."

" Your mother ! my God ! what was her name ? "

" I have never known it — she did not tell her name when she came to see me at my nurse's."

"What! you don't know it? and you have your grandmother with you — she is living."

"Oh, madame, the poor old paralytic is not related to me; she was the mother of my kind nurse who cared for me so well, who kept me with her when my mother had abandoned me; and that is why, since my nurse died, I have always taken care of her mother."

"My God! what is all this I hear? —my child, please — the country where you were brought up?"

"Pierrefitte, madame."

"Pierrefitte — it's indeed the same — and your nurse's name?"

"Catherine Mauger."

"Ah, there is no longer any doubt! you are my daughter."

Ambroisine took Lise in her arms, she covered her with kisses, saying,—

"Yes, you are indeed my daughter; but do not imagine that I ever for a moment had a thought of abandoning you — I who was so happy to have a daughter. You have been — we have both been unworthily deceived. I had an aunt who detested you; during a stay which I made in Italy for the re-establishment of my health, this aunt, whom I had begged to watch over you, told me that you were dead."

"Oh, then it must have been she who wrote to my nurse and sent her a sum of money large enough for her to go and establish herself in busi-

ness in Paris; and told her to call me, for the future, Lise only, in place of the name of Léontine which my mother had given me."

"Léontine — ah, it was indeed that — your mother! why, that is me, dear little girl, that is indeed me; do you not love me a little? will you not forgive me the ill that I have done you?"

"Oh, madame, mother, I have forgotten all that."

The witnesses of this scene shared the joy and the emotion of these two women, one of whom recovered her daughter whom she had believed dead for a long time; while the other, who had been accused and suspected guilty of a dishonorable action, now found herself embraced, covered with tears and caresses by the beautiful woman who was her mother. Lise in her joy held her hands out to Casimir, exclaiming,—

"Ah, you never thought me guilty." Then she thanked Madame Dermont, as she said to her,—

"Madame, it is to you that I owe my re-establishment in the esteem of everybody; how did you manage to prove my innocence?"

"My dear child, from all that had passed, I guessed that you were a somnambulist, and I had not deceived myself."

"What! I am a somnambulist?"

"Yes, of course, and in your sleep you were still thinking of the silver spoon that you had given to your old companion, and fearing that

some one should steal it from you, you took that which was beside you, thinking it was yours, and you hid it; oh, there's nothing very extraordinary in that, and I have seen somnambulists do many things more out of the way than that."

"But when I wake up I ought to remember what I did while asleep?"

"No, my child, somnambulists never remember what they have done while they were a prey to action in sleep, and that is what is so strange in this malady; for of course it is one, though it passes with youth and disappears entirely when age has calmed our passions and the heat of our blood."

"Now, my dear Lise," said Ambroisine, "do not let us disturb madame any longer, to whom I also owe my happiness, for had it not been for her idea of seeing you asleep, I should not have perceived this locket and so found my daughter. Come, my dear Lise, come with your mother, whom henceforth you shall never leave."

Lise was embarrassed, she murmured,—

"And the poor old woman whom I have never left—do you wish me to abandon her now?"

"No, no, dear girl, I understand your heart, and in finding you again I do not wish to cause you the slightest pain; your nurse's mother shall not leave you, I will take her with us. My apartment is large enough for me to spare her a chamber. In this way, nothing will be lacking to her, and you shall still watch over her."

"Ah, madame — mother, you are kind, also."

"As soon as it is daylight I will go up with you to that poor room where you have lived, and will tell the good old woman that you are no longer an orphan, and that your mother never abandoned you — I will show you my aunt's letter, in which she announces that I have lost my daughter, for I have always preserved it."

"And I, mother, will show you the letter that my nurse received with the sum of money, and in which she was ordered to call me nothing but Lise, and to come and establish herself in Paris."

"Oh, yes, and I am sure that I shall recognize my aunt's writing."

Ambroisine was quite happy; she extended her hand to Casimir, saying,—

"Hereafter, we are friends, I hope; regard me only as Lise's mother, who thanks you for the interest you have taken in and the friendship you have shown for her daughter — and who will never oppose anything that will be for her child's happiness."

Casimir pressed her hand heartily, for it was now that of a friend.

They left Madame Dermont, renewing the thanks that she so well deserved. Lise went up to her room, accompanied by her mother, who did not wish to leave her daughter who had been restored to her only by the greatest chance. On the stairs they found Rouflard, who was coming from the Prohs'.

"They have their spoon," he cried, "it had never left the house. But, hang it, I had some trouble about it. Just imagine, they didn't want to let me in."

When they had heard the bell ring in the middle of the night the Proh family had at first thought it needless to answer; but the sound of the bell did not cease, so they asked, "Who is there?" and on recognizing Rouflard's voice, who was shouting, "It is me, I've come to show you where to find your spoon," the professor had answered, "You are a clown and you wish by this unseasonable joke merely to disturb our rest; tomorrow I will have you hauled before the magistrates."

To which Rouflard had answered,—

"I am not joking, but you people are a family of cucumbers; I want to have you recognize Lise's innocence; the little girl is a somnambulist, and I'm going to show you where to find your spoon; I'll ring the bell till tomorrow morning if necessary."

Madame Proh at length decided to admit him. Then Rouflard said,—

"Come with me, all of you; in the room where Lise passed the night, she has hidden your spoon under the hair mattress of the bed."

"That is impossible," said Angélina, "I should have seen her."

"Why, how could you, if you were asleep? Show me the room anyway."

They went into the young lady's room. The little boy, who had got up too, had heard everything that passed, and he exclaimed,—

"I am going to feel under the mattress."

"No, no, your arm is not long enough," said Rouflard; "let the illustrious professor feel there, if it is agreeable to him to do so."

"Not I; I'll lend myself to none of your new tricks, that you may make game of me — don't expect it."

But during this altercation, Madame Proh, who was very impatient, had already gone down on her knees in front of the bed; she thrust her arm between the mattresses and presently drew out the spoon, saying,—

"Faith, it is true, here it is."

"Well, professor, have I lied to you? what do you say to that?"

"What do I say to that? why, that our wives, daughters, or maids, who attend to household matters, do not take the trouble to turn the mattresses when they make the beds — and so forth and so on."

"Well, monsieur," exclaimed Madame Proh, "women have a great many things to do."

Ambroisine accompanied her daughter to the attic room, where they found the aged mother awake, they informed her of the events of the night and the good woman, after looking long and attentively at the fine lady, exclaimed,—

"Why, yes, yes; I recognize you now. It was you who brought the little one and who came back to Pierrefitte several times to see her."

Then Lise showed the letter which her nurse had received, and Ambroisine recognized her aunt's writing, and if she had had any lingering doubts as to the identity of her daughter, this last proof could not leave her any. For her part she showed Lise also her aunt's letter, which announced to her the death of her infant; for she wished to show her daughter that she had never had any thought of abandoning her.

Upon the day following the night which had been so fruitful of events, a great change took place in the house. Florentine having taken her daughter home, Ambroisine installed Lise in the pretty blue chamber which she had given to the child; then they prepared another room for the poor paralytic, whom they carried from the attics to the first floor, and whose satisfaction was unbounded on learning that, despite her change of fortune, little Lise, whom she looked upon as her daughter, did not wish to separate from her.

Casimir had been greatly surprised and much moved when they had discovered the secret of little Lise's birth; for a moment his heart had constricted like that of one who fears to lose her he loves. But presently he acquired proof that maternal love had extinguished any other feeling in Ambroisine, and that for this woman, now so happy

in having recovered her daughter, the past was nothing more than a dream of which she did not even wish to preserve the remembrance. The young painter could now, therefore, see Lise at her mother's. But during the first months which followed these events, he conducted himself with reserve, for he understood that there are some situations which need time for consolidation. Besides Casimir was working hard now; the success with which his pictures met had redoubled his ardor, his love of painting; in all the arts, it is often the case that nothing but a success is needed to draw a man out of mediocrity and push him into celebrity. And in default of this success, how many men of talent have died without having, as Montaigne said, "Unpacked all their merchandise"?

Six months after these events M. Loursain's death resulted from an attack of indigestion. Ambroisine learned that she was a widow, and, what surprised her still more, she received a letter from a notary informing her that her husband had left her all his fortune, which amounted to nearly three hundred thousand francs. Mademoiselle Rose, the very coquettish maid, with whom her master was so familiar, had as her sole legacy the sum of six hundred francs and a full-length portrait of M. Loursain. In her anger she had a pair of horns added to the portrait, and sold it to serve as a sign to a cookshop keeper, who had written beneath it "Beef à la mode."